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Abstract

The North Caucasus over the past few centuries has been the most painful point on the body of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The "perestroika" processes of the late 80s, the collapse of the USSR and the years of the formation of the new Russian state once again aggravated relations between Moscow and the southern outskirts of Russia. Local interests, nationalist sentiments, and most importantly, economic goals, often covered up by religious slogans, ultimately led to large-scale armed clashes, the epicenter of which was Chechnya.

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Valentin Runov

Purgatory of the Chechen War

Introduction

The North Caucasus over the past few centuries has been the most painful point on the body of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The "perestroika" processes of the late 80s, the collapse of the USSR and the years of the formation of the new Russian state once again aggravated relations between Moscow and the southern outskirts of Russia. Local interests, nationalist sentiments, and most importantly, economic goals, often covered up by religious slogans, ultimately led to large-scale armed clashes, the epicenter of which was Chechnya. The history of relations between the Russian people

and the peoples of the North Caucasus is deep, multifaceted and rather complex. The interest of the Russian state in this region began to manifest itself from the second half of the 16th century. This was facilitated by the spontaneous advance of the Russians to the south in the steppe, which laid the foundation for the formation of the Don and Terek Cossacks. The first Cossack villages, according to available data, appeared on the Don and in the upper reaches of the Sundzha already in the first half of the 16th century. These Cossacks at first did not obey anyone except their elected chieftains, and led an openly robbery lifestyle. But a little later, Moscow tried to attract them to its service, entrusting the protection of its southern

borders. In general, ten stages can be distinguished in the history of relations between Central Russia and the North Caucasus, each of which was characterized by capacious and significant events, each of which left a noticeable mark on the life of

peoples. At the first stage, from the end of the 16th century to the end of the 18th century, there was a process of creating bridgeheads for the subsequent penetration of Russia into the North Caucasus. The beginning of this process was laid by the formation and strengthening of the Terek Cossack army, its acceptance into military service by the Moscow (Russian) state.

Already within the framework of this process, major armed conflicts took place between the Cossacks and Chechens in the North Caucasus. So, it is known that on the eve of the Bulavin uprising in 1707 there was a big Chechen uprising associated with the unfolding then

anti-government movement in Bashkiria. Characteristically, the Terek Cossacks-schismatics joined the Chechens. The rebels took and burned the city of Terki, and then they themselves were defeated by the Astrakhan governor Apraskin. The next time the Chechens revolted in 1785 under the leadership of Sheikh Mansur. Extremely characteristic of these two actions of the Chechens is a pronounced religious coloring of the movement. The uprisings unfold under the slogan of ghazavat (holy war against the infidels). A feature of the second uprising of the Chechens was also an association with the Kumyks and Kabardians, and in Kabarda, princes also opposed Russia at that time. The Kumyk nobility, on the other hand, took a vacillating position and was ready to join the one who turned out to be stronger. The beginning of the strengthening of Russia in Kabarda was laid by the foundation in 1780 of the fortifications of the Azov-Mozdok line (Konstantinovsky fortification in the area of present-day Pyatigorsk and Kislovodsk fortification). At the second stage, from the end of the 18th century to

the first decade of the 19th century, Russia conquered part of the lands in Transcaucasia. This conquest is carried out in the form of campaigns on the territory of the Caucasian state formations and the Russian-Persian (1804-1813) and Russian-Turkish (1806-1812) wars. In 1801 Georgia was annexed to Russia. Then the accession of the southern and eastern khanates began. In 1803, the rulers of Mingrelia, Imeretia and Guria took the oath of allegiance to Russia. In parallel with the conquest of new lands, a struggle was waged aimed at suppressing the anti-Russian actions of some Transcaucasian peoples.

At the third stage, which lasted from 1816 to 1829, an attempt was made by the Russian administration to conquer all the tribes of the Caucasus, to subordinate them to the power of the Russian governor. One of the governors of the Caucasus of this period, General Yermolov, stated: "The Caucasus is a huge fortress, protected by a half-million garrison. We must storm it or take possession of the trenches. But he himself spoke in favor of a siege, which he combined with an offensive. This period is characterized by the emergence of a strong anti-Russian movement (muridism) among the peoples of the North Caucasus and Dagestan and the emergence of leaders of this movement (sheikhs). In addition, the events in the Caucasus during this period unfolded within the framework of the next Russian-Persian (1826–1928

Russian-Turkish (1828–1829) wars, which also greatly disturbed the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus. At

the fourth stage, which lasted from 1830 to 1859, the main efforts of the Russian Empire were concentrated in the North Caucasus to fight Muridism and the Imamate (the Muslim state of Shamil). In the course of this struggle, the Russians tested all the methods of its conduct, and the struggle itself was carried out in some cases almost on an equal footing. But Shamil could not resist the organized power of the mighty northern neighbor for a long time, and the struggle ended with the victory of Russian weapons and Russian diplomacy. In 1859, the powerful imam of Chechnya and Dagestan, having suffered a series of defeats and therefore lost authority among some of his co-religionists, stopped resisting and surrendered to the Russian commander. The final stage of the struggle of the Russian Empire with Shamil's imamate in the North Caucasus took place against the backdrop of the Eastern (Crimean) War of 1853-1855 and was hampered by the general failures of Russian weapons.

At the fifth stage, which lasted from 1859 to 1864, the conquest of the Western Caucasus by the Russian Empire was carried out. At this time, the mass migration of highlanders from the mountains to the plains and the displacement of recalcitrant tribes to Turkey was practiced. The lands liberated in this way were settled by the Kuban and Black Sea Cossacks, who were called upon to carry out the Russification of the region, to establish law and order

there. At the sixth stage, which lasted from 1864 to 1917, the government of the Russian Empire tried by all means to normalize the situation in the North Caucasus, to make this region an ordinary territory of a huge state. All levers of pressure were put into play: political, economic, religious, military, police, legal, subjective, and others. It seemed that such a policy could produce positive results. But the outbreak of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 once again revealed great hidden contradictions between the Russian authorities and the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus, which sometimes resulted in open military resistance. Thus, the problem of the North Caucasus was for more than a hundred

years one of the most urgent problems for the Russian Empire. The government tried to solve it by force, diplomatic and

economic ways, but these ways often turned out to be inefficient. More effectively, the problem of conquering and pacifying the North Caucasus was solved with the help of military force. But even this path brought most often only temporary successes. A hidden wound was opened every time a new military storm loomed over the Russian Empire and when more difficult military tasks arose before its government and people. The seventh stage was connected

with the events of the Civil War of 1918-1922. The collapse of the Russian Caucasian front in late 1917 - early 1918 turned into a tragedy not only for the Russian army, but also for the local population. In a short time, Transcaucasia was occupied by the Turks and turned into an arena of terrible genocide against the indigenous Christian population. The weakness of the central Russian government, Muslim sentiments and other factors raised a new wave of armed uprisings in the North Caucasus. The civil war in this traditionally troubled area was extremely cruel and protracted. It was simultaneously fought on several fronts and against everyone who wanted to prevent the highlanders from living a free life. True, the Caucasians themselves at that time did not want to see that they themselves were pawns in someone else's game of a higher order, and their liberties often wore the color of ordinary robbery and theft.

The establishment of Soviet power in the Caucasus did not solve the problems of the North Caucasus. Therefore, it is legitimate to consider the period of the Great Patriotic War as the eighth stage in the history of this region, when the fighting reached the foothills of the Greater Caucasus Range. For political reasons, the Soviet government in 1943 evicted a number of Caucasian peoples to other regions of the country. This only angered the Muslim highlanders, and they fully vented their evil on the Russian-speaking population after they returned to their homeland during the

years of the Khrushchev "thaw". The collapse of the Soviet Union gave impetus to new actions of the peoples of the North Caucasus and opened the ninth page of its history. Three independent states were formed in the Transcaucasus, and in the North Caucasus, which remained within the Russian Federation, powerful separatist and nationalist movements revived, behind which the truth was hidden - the redistribution

the redistribution of property led to the beginning of a new Chechen-Russian war (1994–1996), and then the next Chechen-Russian war (1999–2000).

The tenth stage began after the end of the active phase of the Second Chechen War in 2000 and continues to this day. It was characterized by the fact that after the end of the last war, the Moscow authorities officially announced that the hostilities in the Chechen Republic acquired the character of an anti-terrorist operation, which continues to this day. All attempts by the authorities to announce the end of this operation are shattered by the latest armed attacks by militants, which are taking place not only on the territory of the Chechen Republic, but also on the territory of Ingushetia, Dagestan and other federal entities.

Experts believe that the North Caucasian problem has deep and branched roots, which are not easy to identify and trace. The Russian Empire waged an open war in the North Caucasus and did not hesitate to talk about it. The Soviet Union tried to solve the problems of some peoples of the North Caucasus by a strong-willed method, but then it itself was frightened of this decision and made the Russians hostages of its two-faced policy. The collapse of the Soviet Union fully revealed the abscesses that were on the body of the newly formed state, and above all, the largest abscess in the North Caucasus. It became obvious that this region has always remained problematic, and its rulers have always sought to play their own political game. This game continues to this day.

For many years, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union tried to solve the Caucasian problem by civilized means. They sought to study this land, its culture, customs, to understand its people. But it turned out to be very difficult. The peoples of the North Caucasus have never been united. Often, villages located several kilometers apart, but separated by a mountain range, a gorge or a stormy river, did not communicate with each other for decades, adhering to their own laws and customs. As a result, many beliefs and customs of local significance among the mountain peoples acquire the force of law, and the subjective factor is often placed above objective conditions. Among the mountain tribes, idols almost always live, only one word of which can turn the whole course of events in a completely different direction.

Researchers and historians know that without knowing and taking into account all the factors and features, it is impossible to correctly understand the past, evaluate the present, and predict the future. But instead of identifying, studying and analyzing all the accompanying factors in the formation of the history of the North Caucasus region, first by the Russian Empire, then the USSR and, finally, the Russian Federation, attempts were often made to cut down the roots of what seemed to be a weed. These actions have always been painful, bloody, but not all successful.

With an ax, Russian politicians also approached the solution of the Caucasian problem in the 90s of the XX century. Ignoring the centuries-old historical experience, not properly assessing the situation and relying only on a fairly undermined military force, they opened one of the most painful wounds on the body of the state, quite dangerous for the life of the whole organism. It was only after taking this rash step that Moscow politicians began to look for other ways to solve the problem. But the "reflections" of federal politicians were perceived by the leaders of the highlanders as weakness, and the movement of disobedience to the center flared up with renewed vigor.

As a result of the complex political game of the Russian and Caucasian rulers, for more than fifteen years now, the "North Caucasian syndrome" has existed in the minds of the Russian people, turning this once beautiful region into a theater of endless military operations, and its population into potential enemies and criminals, many of whose representatives live in all regions. cities of Russia. Hundreds of thousands of "refugees" from the North Caucasus flooded Russian cities, "privatized" industrial facilities, retail outlets, markets ... It's no secret that today in Russia the vast majority of people from the North Caucasus live much better than the Russians themselves. The Chechen Republic is flourishing, and new generations of militants, new generations of irreconcilable enemies of Russia are growing up on its territory ... Many mysteries of the last two

wars in the North Caucasus have not been fully solved even today. I will also not be able to give exhaustive answers to many questions in this book. But I am firmly convinced that the main reason for the bleeding wound of the North Caucasus lies in the virus, which is deeply embedded in the brains of some politicians and businessmen. The name of this virus is power and money. Combining these two

terrible forces, you can always put pressure on a sore spot in the form of economic, territorial, religious, cultural or other problems of any region. As long as this virus is alive, it will not be possible to heal the North Caucasian wound, but as long as this wound is open, the virus will always find a favorable habitat for itself and will gradually infect the entire body. Today, the North

Caucasus and especially the Chechen Republic are still very far from being considered prosperous. The Gold Star of the Hero of Russia on the chest of Ramzan Kadyrov does not yet mean that every Chechen is imbued with love for Russia and is ready to faithfully serve the interests of Moscow. It's just a big mystery, behind which there are various forces and very big interests. Only time will unravel this mystery. We can only argue on this topic from the position of already accomplished facts and build our own hypotheses.

North Caucasian problems in the early 1990s

The weakening of the Soviet Union immediately gave impetus to the activation of parochial and nationalist movements in the North Caucasus. In practically all autonomous republics, parties and political groups arose that claimed power, which were immediately joined by entrepreneurs and leaders of organized groups of criminals. Soon these forces became decisive in the formation of domestic policy in all these national entities. Chechnya, with its oil fields in the Grozny region, was one of the most industrialized

regions of the North Caucasus. However, the development of this region was uneven: the areas associated with the extraction, transport and processing of oil, in terms of the degree of development, were significantly ahead of others, where agriculture and tribal relations prevailed. The former were dominated by official Soviet power and partocrats, while the latter were ruled by elders, priests and laws that had developed over the centuries. For some time, these two systems still somehow coexisted side by side, especially without invading foreign territory. Perestroika upset this balance. There is an opinion that the decision to build a biochemical plant in Gudermes

became the reason for the dissatisfaction of the Chechens with the central government. Perhaps this is so. But often researchers confuse the cause with the occasion. I personally think that this project was only a pretext for starting the process that had long been carefully prepared against the Soviet Union by the conductors of the West. The spark of civil war, the flames of which flared up more and more in Transcaucasia, had to be transferred to the territory of the Russian Federation, to draw the army into these events, thus paralyzing the main force that could prevent the collapse of the USSR. In February 1988, an initiative group appears in Chechnya, which opposes the construction of a biochemical plant in

Gudermes under the pretext that this enterprise will violate the environment

of this area. At the same time, the activists did their best to avoid questions about the development of the Chechen economy, its receipt of huge funds for social development, the introduction of thousands of new jobs, and many others. The official authorities, in turn, did nothing to dispel the fears of the people, many of which were far-fetched: hundreds of such factories were already successfully operating in the world, and by that time a safe technology for this production already existed. Western "conductors" were not satisfied with the peaceful settlement of the conflict, and it developed according to a previously developed

scenario. During the rallies, new leaders appeared, who by the summer of 1988 united in an organization aimed at resisting the authorities and dubbed the Union for the Promotion of Perestroika. But since there was really no talk of any union, and the movement was set up for confrontation, it was soon renamed the People's Front of Checheno-Ingushetia, which was headed by Khozh-Akhmed Bisultanov, and instead of environmental slogans, political slogans sounded at the rallies. In addition to this front, other informal groups arose in Chechnya at the end of the 80s, which preached nationalist ideas and opposed everything Russian. Recall that in 1989 the population of Chechnya, according to the census, was 1,270 thousand people, of which 40% were non-Chechen, including 239 thousand Russians.

Moscow did not seem to notice the development of the negative processes taking place in the North Caucasus. Moreover, by convening a congress of people's deputies in May 1989 in Moscow and turning it into a farce on a nationwide scale, the authorities acknowledged their helplessness and weakness before the whole country. Sensing this, leaders on the ground began to more boldly pursue an independent and independent policy. First of all, a personnel reshuffle was carried out, as a result of which the "necessary" people were put in all key positions, then the "nationalization" of the administrative apparatus, the leadership of law enforcement agencies and law enforcement agencies took place. In July, at an extraordinary

plenum of the Chechen-Ingush regional committee of the CPSU, Doku Gapurovich Zavgaev was elected first secretary, rejecting the protege of the Kremlin. It was the local population

perceived as a victory for the national-patriotic forces (for the first time during the years of Soviet power, a Chechen became the head of the republic). Soon he made sure that Chechens also stood at the head of the ideological bodies of the republic, and in 1990, almost all key posts in the republic were occupied by Chechens. In 1989, the President of the country M. S. Gorbachev became the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the First Secretary Doku Zavgaev became the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. But neither one nor the other did anything to strengthen Soviet power in the state territories entrusted to them. True, Zavgaev did a lot to strengthen personal power and the power of the clergy in the republic, more than 200 mosques were built in two years, two Islamic universities (Kurchaloy and Nazran) were opened, and an intensified preaching of Muridism began. At the household level in Chechnya, there was a widespread infringement of the rights of the Russian population. In 1989 alone, 19,000 Russians left the territory of Chechnya, having sold houses, apartments and

property for next to nothing, and in 1990 another 60,000 people left. In March 1990, elections of people's deputies of the RSFSR were held. It is not surprising that in Grozny, the second secretary of the regional committee of the CPSU, Pavel Gromov, was defeated by a Chechen by nationality, Professor Ruslan Khasbulatov. By that time, Chechen entrepreneurs began to appear in various regions of the USSR, who quickly took leading positions in the oil,

banking, trade, hotel and gambling business. After the events of August 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated into fifteen state entities, and the former RSFSR, which turned into the Russian Federative State, having declared itself the legal successor of the former USSR, inherited nothing but its debts. But the losses of the country were huge. If until 1991 the territory of the USSR was 22.4 million square meters. km, and the population is almost 250 million people, then after the collapse of the USSR, the territory of the Russian Federation was only 17 million square meters. km, and the population is less than 130 million people. Many of the ceded territories and their population soon joined Russia's opponents, others pursued an openly hostile policy against it, and still others took a wait-and-see attitude. It was the defeat of the country, the likes of which in world history, there are very few.

The collapse of the USSR led to the formation of three independent states in the Transcaucasus: Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, with which the Greater Caucasus Range became the border. The North Caucasus remained part of the Russian Federation. Geographically, it included the south of the Krasnodar Territory, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan. And if the first four territorial formations, despite the presence of various sharp contradictions, kept within the framework of legality, then the last three quickly became involved in events that went beyond the boundaries of peaceful life.



Gorbachev Mikhail Sergeevich, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1985–1990), President of the USSR (1990–1991)

Dagestan ended up in the hands of local rulers, tribal leaders, national entrepreneurs and criminals. Very quickly, all these forces merged into one structure, which, while retaining a national identity, did not radically oppose itself to Moscow. This made Dagestan relatively calm

territory, almost completely at the mercy of local national authorities. The Dagestanis themselves did their best not to unnerve the center once again, and behind the screen of loyalty, they went about their own business and launched their own business. In Dagestan, illegal production of many industrial goods and agricultural products was organized, clandestine fisheries, uncontrolled mining, and much more arose. As work at these enterprises, hired and even slave labor of citizens was widely used, who were brought there from all territories of the former USSR. Other offenses were constantly noted.



Shevardnadze Eduard Amvrosievich, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Georgia (1972–1985), Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1985–1999)

However, in the process of separatism among the republics of the North Caucasus, of course, Chechnya was in the lead. The Chechen problem was brewing systematically, although rather rapidly, the leaders of the former USSR and the young Russian state knew about it, but before

It has not been widely publicized for some time. Today, looking at the decline and collapse of the USSR, at the events that took place in Russia in the early 90s, you understand that everything that happened at that time was well planned and staged in the West. True, some domestic politicians also had a hand in this ...



Yeltsin Boris Nikolaevich (1931–2007), President of the Russian Federation (1991–1999)

Nationalist sentiments in Chechnya have always dominated. Chechnya fiercely resisted Russia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. But it was the second half of the 1980s, with the beginning of Gorbachev's "perestroika", that became a fertile time for the development of these sentiments and their development into a policy pursued by the local leadership and in line with which the majority of the local population followed. "People's" leaders immediately appeared, who were playing a frank game against the CPSU, the authorities of Moscow and everything Russian. "Warmed up" from abroad, the activity of Chechen communities outside the republic has intensified. Already in those years

emissaries of various kinds freely traveled around Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, calling on the faithful to stand under the green banner of Islam and revive the ideas preached by the imams in the 19th century. Official authorities practically did not interfere with this work.

Since 1990, the Chechens have been looking for a leader. Being a warlike nation, they looked first of all at the military. That is why their eyes settled on the only Chechen general, Dzhokhar Dudayev, who commanded an aviation division stationed in Tartu, and was characterized as a very ambitious and proud person. The CIA and Scotland Yard have been eyeing this man for a long time, the residents of these special services, who were in the Baltics at that time, worked closely with him. Soon the name of Dudayev began to be popularized on

the territory of Chechnya and became famous in the corridors of the Kremlin. The decision, of course, was made outside the Soviet Union. At first, the Soviet "democrats" of Western orientation and Chechen elders thoroughly worked with Dudayev. Then, accompanied by KGB officers, he arrived in Moscow, where he met with some representatives of the RSFSR authorities, including B. N. Yeltsin. The content of the conversations between Dudayev and Yeltsin during these meetings can only be guessed at, since no documents remain. But one thing is clear - they did not serve the interests of the USSR and Russia.



Khasbulatov Ruslan Imranovich

Shortly thereafter, Dudayev was transferred from Tartu to Grozny, where he immediately became an iconic figure. With his appearance in Grozny, the Chechens acted more boldly. At the end of November 1990, the 1st Congress of the National Congress of the Chechen People (OKCHN) took place, which adopted a declaration on the formation of the Chechen Republic of Nokhchi-Cho. It is not surprising that the executive committee of the congress was headed by Dzhokhar Musaevich Dudayev. On November 25, the congress, on behalf of the Chechen people, adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty, indicating, however, that "the Chechen people highly value the union of national republics and are ready to be a sovereign and equal subject of the union treaty and the union of sovereign republics." Moscow silently swallowed this bitter pill.

Foreign advisers demanded more decisive steps from Dudayev and his comrades. November 27, 1990 session of the Supreme

The Council of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, under pressure from D. Dudayev, adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty and presented claims to Russia and the USSR for compensation for the material and moral damage

suffered by the Chechens as a result of deportation. The Soviet government could not and did not want to decisively prevent this. Instead of condemning the first manifestations of separatism and Chechen nationalism in the bud on a strictly scientific basis, the newly-minted "democrats" began to pour dirt on the Soviet system and Soviet history with all their might for the sake of any "sensational exposure".

For some time, D. Zavgaev tried to maneuver between the governments of the USSR and the RSFSR, trying to snatch fatter pieces from each. But it couldn't last that long. D. Dudayev, who arrived in Grozny, stood up in fierce opposition to the power of D. Zavgaev, Russia and the USSR. Soon Dudayev had many supporters. The contradictions between the Chechens and the Cossacks living on the territory of the republic became even more aggravated, the killings and beatings of the latter began. Zavgaev did not react to this in any way.

On March 11, 1991, Chechnya refused to participate in the All-Union referendum on the preservation of the USSR. This openly declared the policy of the Chechen leadership aimed at separatism. But even after that, MS Gorbachev and BN Yeltsin openly flirted with the Chechens. On April 26, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR adopted the Law "On the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples." In accordance with this law, significant additional funds were allocated to Chechnya and Ingushetia, which immediately ended up in the pockets of local bigwigs and rulers. On June 9, 1991, at

the Second Session of the Congress of the Chechen People, D. Dudayev called for the overthrow of the Supreme Soviet of Checheno-Ingushetia as having lost the right to act as the legitimate authority of a sovereign republic. He made a statement that the Republic of Nokhchi-Cho is not officially part of either the RSFSR or the USSR. The Executive Committee of the United Congress of the Chechen People (OKChN) is declared to be a temporary body of power on the territory of the republic.

The formation of the national Chechen army begins, the ranks of which include servicemen of Chechen nationality who deserted from the Soviet Army, national units

internal troops, policemen and numerous volunteers. Among the latter were criminals released from prisons and other declassified elements. The initial armament of these formations took place at the expense of DOSAAF institutions and by the delivery of weapons from abroad. B. N. Yeltsin also made his contribution to the strengthening of Chechen

separatism. Arriving in Chechnya on the eve of the elections, he proclaimed in his campaign speech: "Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow." The Chechens readily responded to the call of the Russian leader. The policy of the Chechen leaders was no longer coordinated with Moscow, the republic was preparing to follow its own path, not seeing a fellow traveler either in the face of the USSR or in the face of Russia. As a token of gratitude for such "support" in the presidential elections in June 1991, the majority of Chechens and Ingush voted for B. N. Yeltsin.

On June 22, 1991, the Second Congress of Checheno-Ingushetia took place. D. Dudayev was elected chairman of the OKChN and set about creating parallel authorities in Chechnya. At the same time, the forces of the armed formations of this republic, which were officially called the National Guard, were building up.

In the August days of 1991, D. Dudayev and his supporters without hesitation took the side of B. N. Yeltsin and the Russian parliament. The Supreme Council of Checheno-Ingushetia, headed by D. Zavgaev, was two days late in its choice: Zavgaev, with the quality characteristic of a Soviet functionary, was cautious and waited for who would gain the upper hand in Moscow. These days turned out to be fatal for the communists. On August 22, D. Dudayev called a rally in Grozny and demanded that D. Zavgaev be held accountable for his silence during the coup. For Dudayev's public speech, a television center in Grozny was seized, which the Chechen leader took full advantage of. Zavgaev had to be content with oral presentations in half-empty classrooms.

In the next two days, having received reinforcements from the inhabitants of the mountain villages who arrived in Grozny, the Dudaevites went on the offensive. The monument to V. I. Lenin on the main square of the city was destroyed, the buildings of the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the republic were blocked, the building of the Council of Ministers was seized. Curators who arrived from Moscow

forbade law enforcement agencies to interfere with these "democratic" processes. The conflict between D. Zavgaev and D. Dudayev was gaining momentum. At this time, Moscow once again played along with D. Dudayev. R. I. Khasbulatov, speaker of the Supreme Soviet of Russia, sent a telegram to Grozny suggesting that the Supreme Soviet of the republic, headed by D. Zavgaev, dissolve itself. Zavgaev did not accept this "offer", but his authority was undermined. Shortly thereafter, B. N. Yeltsin and R. I. Khasbulatov decided to remove D. Zavgaev from his post, suggesting Salambek Khadzhiev in his place. But the deputies of the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic defended their chairman. At the same time, this Chechen leader categorically refused to go to Moscow, despite numerous telegrams and threats from R. I. Khasbulatov. Doku Zavgaev, who allegedly supported the State Emergency Committee, was outlawed by the Russian authorities.

On September 1, 1991, the 3rd Congress of the Chechen people was held, which resulted in the creation of the Provisional Supreme Council for the leadership of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, headed by D. Dudayev. On September 3, on behalf of the congress, he announced the deposition of the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, which 12 days later was supported by the OKChN. But before that, on September 5, in Grozny, a detachment of the "national guard" seized the building of the KGB of the republic, and the Executive Committee of the OKChN announced that the laws of the USSR do not apply

on the territory of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. The very next day, the guardsmen of the National Congress of the Chechen people dispersed the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. At the same time, detachments of the "national guard" broke into the premises where the meeting of the Supreme Council was taking place, beat the deputies and killed the chairman of the Grozny City Council, V. Kutsenko. On the wave of victorious euphoria, D. Dudayev once again demanded in an ultimatum from the USSR to recognize the independence

Moscow was frankly confused. On September 10, by order of the President of the RSFSR B. N. Yeltsin, a delegation headed by State Secretary G. Burbulis was sent to Grozny. It was officially announced that this delegation was trying to agree on a set of measures to stabilize the situation, but the real results of its work are unknown.

A few days after the return of this delegation to Moscow, a Provisional Supreme Council was elected to prepare and conduct elections for new authorities in Chechnya, scheduled for November 17, 1991. D. Dudayev was nominated as a candidate for the presidency of Chechnya, whose main election slogan is the sovereignty of Chechnya, its complete independence from Russia. The extraordinary session, assembled at the suggestion of R. I. Khasbulatov, did not support Moscow and decided to resign D. Zavgaev and self-dissolve the Supreme Council of Checheno-Ingushetia.

On September 14, Speaker of the Russian Parliament R. I. Khasbulatov arrived in Grozny. At his request, the Supreme Council of the Chechen Republic of Ingushetia met. The building where the meeting was held was guarded by Dudayev's militants. Khasbulatov intimidated the deputies, demanding that they vote for the self-dissolution of the Supreme Council. They were gloomily silent. Then the Russian speaker announced the end of the meeting, and when they left the building, the militants, threatening with machine guns, took away their mandates from the deputies. Then, by order of R. I. Khasbulatov, the Provisional Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic was elected, headed by Khusein Akhmadov, and Khasbulatov's man Yuri Cherny became his deputy. But already in early October, a conflict arose between these people and their supporters. But the real master in

Chechnya was Dudayev. On October 1, the Executive Committee of the OKCHN announced the division of the Chechen-Ingush Republic into two independent republics - the Chechen and Ingush

Autonomous Republics within the RSFSR. On October 5, seven out of nine members of the Supreme Council of the Chechen Ingush Republic decided to dismiss Kh. Akhmadov and declared illegal the decisions to divide the republic into two national entities. In response to this, the next day the Executive Committee of the OKChN announced the dissolution of the Supreme Council of the Chechen Ingush Republic and took over all the functions of the "revolutionary committee for the transitional period with full power." A decision is made to elect the President and Parliament of the Chechen Republic on October 27, 1991.

On October 6, a Russian delegation headed by Vice-President of the Russian Federation A.V. Rutskoi arrived in Grozny. The vice president got acquainted with the situation in the republic, talked with many of its leaders, including

including with Dudayev. Returning to Moscow, he reported to B. N. Yeltsin that Dudayev could not be trusted, and described what was happening in Chechnya in the darkest colors. After that, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR adopted a resolution "On the situation in the Chechen-Ingush Republic" and instructed A. V. Rutskoi to ensure the establishment of order in this territory.

Without waiting for the elections, on October 8, the Executive Committee of the United Congress of the Chechen People, headed by D. Dudayev, decided to dissolve the Provisional Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, effectively carrying out a coup and usurping power. All appeals of the Russian authorities, decrees of the President of Russia, resolutions of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR were ignored by the leaders of Chechnya. Dudayev announced the mobilization of all men aged 15 to 55, put the "national guard" on alert and began to recall all persons of Chechen nationality from the Russian Armed Forces. Military training was introduced in all universities in Chechnya and in high schools. It was a real preparation for a big war. On October 24, the

Provisional Supreme Council of Checheno-Ingushetia declared the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for October 27 by the OKCHN Executive Committee illegal. On the same day, Akhmed Arsanov, Deputy Minister of Forestry of the Chechen-Ingushetia, was appointed representative of the President of Russia in Chechnya. At the same time, a representative

delegation consisting of generals P. Deinekin, B. Gromov, R. Aushev and the singer I. Kobzon, deeply respected by all ordinary Soviet people, left for Grozny in order to persuade D. Dudayev to refuse to work in Chechnya and return to serve in the Armed Forces. Russian forces, offering him a high rank and position. However, these negotiations were not successful. D. Dudayev was guided by the principle "It is better to be the first in the countryside than the second in the city" and flatly refused Moscow's proposals. On October 26, the Grozny press published a resolution

of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, according to which the elections of October 27 to the highest bodies of the Chechen Republic were called illegal and, therefore, their results were not valid. Except

In addition, the Provisional Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Republic scheduled a referendum for November 17, during which residents had to answer two questions: about the advisability of establishing the post of president of the Chechen-Ingush Republic and about the advisability of dividing this republic into two parts - Chechnya and Ingushetia. Elections to the parliament

of the republic were scheduled for the same date. Moscow tried to influence the situation in Chechnya, but it was clearly out of its control. On October 27, 1991, in a situation close to military, under the complete control of the militants, at gunpoint, by a "majority" of votes, D. Dudayev was elected President of the Chechen Republic. According to some information, 10-12% of voters participated in the elections, and they were not held in Nadterechny, two Cossack, and also in three Ingush regions of the republic. The latter was explained by the fact that the extraordinary congress of deputies of Ingushetia, held in Nazran in mid-September, proclaimed the Ingush Republic as part of Russia. Ruslan Aushev, former Major General of the Soviet Army, Hero of the Soviet Union, also

became its president. The election of the Chechen president is not recognized by the members of the former Supreme Council of Checheno-Ingushetia, but D. Dudayev is no longer interested in their opinion. Continuing the previously outlined line, on November 1, he promulgated the Decree "On declaring the sovereignty of the Chechen Republic from November 1, 1991." At the same time, the Sunzha region, largely populated by the Ingush, was also included in the republic, which caused discontent in Nazran. There was a threat of a conflict, in the resolution of which

Moscow finally intervened. On November 2, the 5th Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR declared the elections in Chechnya illegal and contrary to the Constitution of the RSFSR. On this basis, five days later, the Decree of the President of the RSFSR "On the introduction of a state of emergency in the Chechen-Ingush Republic" was published. But this Decree is not approved at an emergency session of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, and Yeltsin agrees with this decision. Thus, a real chance was lost to restore

order in Chechnya without the use of military force. On November 9, the ceremony of taking the presidential oath by D. Dudayev took place in Grozny. I

held in the presence of representatives of the clergy. The parliament of the republic adopted an amendment to the Constitution of the Chechen Republic, according to which Islam was proclaimed the state religion. Once again, hostile intentions towards the northern neighbor were officially announced.

Dudayev Dzhokhar Musaevich was born in January 1944 in the village of Yalgori, Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the family belonged to the Taipu Yalkhoroy. Dzhokhar was the seventh child in a family of 9 children. In 1944, during the deportation, the Dudaev family was first deported to Pavlograd, then to the South Kazakhstan region, from where it returned in 1957. After graduating from high school, he entered the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of the North Ossetian State University, but from the second year he secretly left Ordzhonikidze and entered the Tambov Higher Military Aviation School named after M. Raskova. After graduating from college, he served in the Moscow and Trans-Baikal military districts. In 1974 he graduated from the command faculty of the Yuri Gagarin Air Force Academy. He served in Siberia, Ukraine, the Baltic States in parts of Long-Range Aviation. In 1987 he was appointed commander of an aviation division in Tartu, major general. In 1988-1989, he took part in air strikes against the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and the Red Star. Until that time, he had not been noticed in any nationalist ambitions, his wife Alla Fedorovna (nee Kulikova) was Russian, two sons were brought up in the family in the Russian spirit.

Sixteen years after the troubled year of 1991, many of the main factors that caused the Chechen war can be identified and named. But this will be only the visible tip of a huge iceberg, the base of which is hidden by the muddy waters of big politics. Its main engines were power, money, the vast natural resources of the country and the struggle for a market for low-quality foreign goods. There was an unprecedented robbery in history of the 150 millionth Russian people by everyone who was not lazy. D. Dudayev was among such "smart and dexterous" people.

One of the main activities of the Chechen president was the formation of national armed forces and the accumulation of weapons. In particular, when he became president, he announced

an increase in the upper limit of the age of mobilized from 55 to 65 years. And the arming of the Chechen army was carried out successfully and not without the help of the top Russian military leadership.



Grachev Pavel Sergeevich, Minister of Defense of Russia (1992-1995),
army General

In December 1991, a delegation headed by First Deputy Defense Minister P. Grachev was sent to Chechnya. This trip was sanctioned by the Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Armed Forces of the CIS, Air Marshal E. Shaposhnikov, who sought to prevent the arming of the Chechens. But Grachev "in his own way" reacted to the fulfillment of the task. According to Musa Timishev, editor-in-chief of the Kavkaz newspaper, during the visit Grachev behaved in an unmilitary manner. He openly fawned before Dzhokhar. I spoke with him for a long time in a separate office, without witnesses. For the night, the generals retired to visit one of the oil tycoons of the republic, Dzhokhar's friend, for a drink. After this meeting with Grachev, Dudayev assured his associates that

"Shaposhnikov should soon be thrown out of his chair, and then the military units will be

ours." At the end of February 1992, Shaposhnikov was indeed removed. Instead of him, PS Grachev became the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation. And literally a day after that, Dzhokhar Dudayev and Vice-President of Chechnya Zelimkhan Yandarbiev gave the order to "cleanse" Russian military units stationed in the republic from weapons and military equipment.

It happened quite simply. With the onset of darkness and until the morning, the crowded KamAZ trucks were taking out weapons and ammunition from the warehouses. The highest officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechnya acted hand in hand with ordinary robbers, who loaded their Mercedes with machine guns, pistols, cartridges. The Republic was rapidly armed.

On the fourth day of this orgy, D. Dudayev and Z. Yandarbiev made a masterful move to cover their tracks: they involved the broad masses of the people in the crime. The gates of the military units were wide open, hundreds of people were dragging on themselves everything they could - boots, gas masks, auto parts, canned food, uniforms, soldier's underwear. In the darkness, shells suddenly began to burst, a grandiose fire blazed. Several unfortunates were blown up by mines ...

The deed was done: Dzhokhar and his henchmen, having robbed most of the military units in Grozny, wrote off everything to the people. But according to Ruslan Martagov, who worked as the press secretary of Doku Zavgaev, then the Chechens seized several tens of thousands of small arms and grenade launchers, which immediately spread throughout the North Caucasus and settled in the caches of Grozny, other cities and mountain villages.

Between November 1991 and May 1992, two governments operated in Chechnya. The Cabinet of Ministers, headed by D. Dudayev, who dealt mainly with political issues, and the provisional government. Bislan Gantimirov was appointed chairman of the city assembly of Grozny. The Ministry of Defense of

Chechnya and the main headquarters of the armed formations subordinate to D. Dudayev were in the hands of Lieutenant General Viskhan Shakhbavov (a former colonel in the Soviet Army, who was given the title by Dudayev), and Aslan was his deputy

Maskhadov, head of the operational department - Ali Matsaev (both also former colonels of the Soviet Army).

The Chechen national army was formed quite quickly. By November 1, 1991, the number of the National Guard reached 62 thousand people, and together with the people's militia - more than 90 thousand people. True, the combat detachments of the National Guard, formed from former officers and persons who had completed military service in the Soviet Army, amounted to less than 2 thousand people. The rest were men and youths who had no military training, but were ready to constantly brandish weapons and follow their commanders.

After D. Dudayev came to power, nationalist sentiments in Chechnya began to progress rapidly. The slogan "Rob the loot" was thrown, under which frank attacks on the Russian-speaking population began, robberies, beatings, and murders. More and more forces were gradually drawn into the hunt for Russian property. It got to the point that teenagers, in the presence of adult Chechens, beat old men and old women with stones in the streets, groups of young people entered the houses and apartments of the "infidels" in broad daylight and took everything they liked, Chechen families who had been friends with the families of Russian neighbors for decades, demanded that the latter sell their houses for nothing and get out of Chechnya in a matter of days. At the same time, such a phenomenon as the theft of people and trafficking in them was progressing, Russian young women, children, who became the main object of hunting, especially suffered.

The command of the Russian troops located on the territory of Chechnya, deprived of the right to self-defense, was forced to appeal to official Moscow for help. Thus, on March 24, 1992, the commander of military unit 30106 stationed in Grozny, Major General Sokolov, made a statement to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation. It stated:

"Since the election of the President of the Chechen Republic and the declaration of sovereignty over military units and the military personnel themselves, there has been a sharp change in attitude both on the part of power structures and on the part of the population, which is constantly fueled by the fact that units of the Soviet Army are the source of all negative phenomena in the republic. Unfounded accusations of embezzlement and

sale of weapons, military equipment and other military property. Tensions against military personnel and military units tend to increase. Repeatedly demands were made to leave the republic, to give not only the property of units, but also individual military personnel from among officers and ensigns as allegedly stolen in the republic at the expense of the local population. Increasingly, the demands were accompanied by threats of physical violence.

No decision has been made on any fact of insulting officers and warrant officers, members of their families, including physical ones, attacks on sentries, seizure of vehicles by the competent authorities of the republic, the perpetrators have not been found and punished, the stolen goods have not been returned. The peak of tension in relation to military units occurred in the first ten days of February, when certain extremist circles organized attacks on military camps in order to seize weapons and loot.

So the regiment of internal troops, the aviation training regiment, the regiment of the RTV air defense of the country were captured and

defeated. In the period from 7 to 9 February, attacks were organized on units district training center - the 1st and 15th military camps.

As a result of the attacks, part of the weapons, vehicles and other property worth more than two million rubles were stolen. Military camps and especially warehouses with weapons and ammunition managed to be defended by the efforts of the officers. By the decision of the President, paramilitary formations were appointed to prevent repeated attacks on the 1st and 15th military camps, which were tasked with the external protection of military camps. However, these units, using the connivance of their leadership, took the path of organized robbery of military camps, insulting officers and, as a conclusion, organizing confrontation between regular army servicemen and paramilitary units and the people as a whole.

Thus, the personnel of the Cheborz company under the command of Shamil carried out a daily robbery of the 1st military camp. 8 units of automotive equipment were stolen, weapons were removed and stolen from three BRDMs, communications equipment, auto parts, clothing and other property.

The personnel of the "Afghan battalion", guarding the 15th military camp, also stole several pieces of military equipment,

13 small arms were illegally confiscated from officers, batteries, auto parts and other property were stolen. Including 10 machine guns received by the head of the service and the head of the warehouse for the re-equipment of officers on the orders of the unit commander. This case can be regarded as a direct robbery. All attempts to stop the

looting of military camps by their "defenders" were unsuccessful. Appeals to the leadership of the republic, including the president, did not yield any results. Moreover, from the investigative actions of the prosecutor's office of the republic, conducting an investigation into the attack on military units, we can conclude that they are trying to make only military personnel the main culprits. Only officers and warrant officers are interrogated, and no action is taken against specific organizers and perpetrators of the attack and everyday robbery.

I ask you to draw certain conclusions and practical actions based on this statement, to protect the officer corps from abuse and insults, military camps from robbery and theft. Otherwise, the officers reserve the right to defend their lives, honor and dignity themselves, using all the forces and means at our disposal.

What was the reaction of the Russian government to such alarming signals? She remained passive, and at times was completely unpredictable! In April 1992, at a closed

meeting of the Russian Security Council, Grachev proposed transferring to Dudayev 50% of the weapons in Chechnya, citing the fact that it was more economically profitable, since the transportation of military equipment would be expensive. This proposal was liked, and its author received the right to implement his project. In May, the formation of the Cabinet of

Ministers of the Chechen Republic was completed, and the provisional government was dissolved. President D. Dudayev assumed the duties of prime minister (head of government). Ministerial portfolios were distributed mainly among his supporters.

D. Dudayev and his supporters continued to build up their "muscles". Russia did not interfere with this. Moreover, by the directive of P. Grachev dated May 28, 1992, D. Dudayev received half of everything that was in

Chechnya weapons, military equipment and military property. The rest was to be exported to other parts of the country.

The agreement of the federal authorities and complete impunity for all previous actions convinced Dudayev of his strength. He was already a little half, he wanted more. The Chechen president ordered to block the export of weapons from the republic. It happened quite simply: "The

remnants of former luxury" were scraped out from military depots and loaded onto a large transport plane bound for Moscow," wrote one of the eyewitnesses. - Dzhokhar wished the officer accompanying the weapon a happy journey. But as soon as he left the presidential office, Dudayev called the airport and ordered Abu Arsanukaev (head of the president's security guard) to delay the flight. The plane was "overlaid" with fuel trucks. After some time, the same officer accompanying the cargo returned to the president's office and, naive, began to be indignant: "Dzhokhar Musaevich, well, this is in no framework ..." In response, Dudayev smiled thinly. Pointing to the officer on a chair next to him, he called Grachev in Moscow. The essence of the subsequent conversation with the minister boiled down to the fact that it was necessary to leave the remaining "small things" in Grozny. Grachev agreed and personally ordered the officer to hand over the cargo of the aircraft to the representatives of the Chechen president.

In July 1992, under the threat of military action by the Chechens, Russian troops left the territory of the republic practically disarmed. According to various sources, Dudayev had at his disposal from 108 to 134 units of armored vehicles (including 42 T-62 and T-72 tanks, 34–36 infantry fighting vehicles, 30 armored personnel carriers), from 139 to 153 artillery systems (including 18 reactive volley fire systems "Grad" and 30 122-mm howitzers D-30), 77 ATGM sets, several hundred anti-tank grenade launchers, 27 anti-aircraft guns and installations, 426 aircraft (of which 5 are combat), 2 helicopters, more than 50 thousand small arms weapons, 27 wagons of ammunition, 3050 tons of fuel and lubricants, 38 tons of clothing and 254 tons of military food.

Also, information appears in the Russian media about the purchase of weapons by the Dudaevites in other regions of the country. So, the correspondent of "Moskovsky Komsomolets" A. Kolpakov published

the material of his conversation with a Chechen who allegedly personally "bought" 17 Grad installations from the command of the Far Eastern Military District and transported them to Grozny. He also reported on the "commercial ties" of the Chechen authorities with the commander of the Trans-Baikal Military District Vladimir Magomedovich Semyonov, a Karachai by nationality, later - the commander-in-chief of the Ground Forces. True, two weeks later, the Segodnya newspaper clarified that on January 26, 1992, in Primorye, Chechens bought just one Grad installation for one and a half million rubles. The purchase of the rest of the combat vehicles fell through the fault of the storekeepers-ensigns. Of course, not all information of this kind deserves full trust. Moreover, for the purpose of anti-army propaganda, much of it is obviously false and exaggerated. But if the deals were successfully concluded at the highest level, then what about the grass-roots structures?

Preparing for a new war with Russia, Chechnya was accumulating money. The Chechen authorities received a large profit from the sale of oil abroad. In Chechnya itself, little was mined (between 1991 and 1993, about 10 million tons), but at that time much more "black gold" was pumped from the territory of Russia, which was processed at local factories - about 28.5 million tons. In addition, about 30 million tons of oil were sold abroad from Russia at the same time through front companies through the territory of Chechnya. Thus, in just three years, Chechnya, at its own discretion, disposed of approximately 50 million tons of Russian oil, the money for which ended up in the accounts of the Chechen authorities and Moscow officials.

Chechnya received huge amounts of money from the drug and arms trade from abroad. They came there from everywhere, stored, packaged, and then resold to interested countries and individuals. On the territory of

Chechnya, the issue of counterfeit Russian money and bank advice was organized. The funds obtained in this way amounted to hundreds of billions of rubles.

Money was sent to Chechnya as "aid" from Moscow and in official order. On July 20, 1992, First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia V.F. Shumeiko signed an order to allocate 5,090 million rubles to the Chechen Republic

in cash, and a little later, another Deputy Prime Minister, S. M. Shakhrai, ordered that another 2.5 billion rubles be sent to

Dudayev. Another thing is striking - why did Russia not take advantage of the situation of disunity that arose in Chechnya at that time? By July, the Bako (Right) group, which was opposed to the president, was formed in the Chechen parliament, headed by the first deputy chairman of the Executive Committee Yu. Soslambekov. She demanded to deprive D. Dudayev of the powers of the head of government and proposed to form the Cabinet of Ministers, responsible to the parliament. But the Chechen president ignored these demands. At the end of June 1993, D. Dudayev announced the restoration of the work of the parliament he had previously dispersed "without the right to legislative power." A relative of Dudayev was appointed chairman of this parliament, and a relative of Vice-President Yandarbiyev was appointed his deputy. The new parliament decided to deprive Y. Suslambekov of deputy powers. He, the former chairman of the parliament and his supporters found support among the representatives of their teips. But their actions coincided with the execution in Moscow of the Supreme Soviet of Russia and remained virtually unnoticed.

Playing on the "hot" field

It's no secret that 1993 was a year of intensified disagreements both between the Supreme Council and the President of Russia, and between the President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin and the President of the Chechen Republic D. M. Dudayev. The first were "successfully resolved" by the shooting of the rebellious parliament in the White House and the crowds in the Ostankino area. The resolution of the latter, due to the remoteness of Chechnya from Moscow and the intractability of Dudayev, required several different approaches while observing the ancient principle: divide and rule.

With the help of Moscow, an active opposition was created to the Dudayev regime. Its center was the Nadterechny district, whose head, U. Avturkhanov, spoke out against the separation of Chechnya from Russia. The former mayor of Grozny, B. Gantemirov, created a "principality" independent of Dudayev in his native Urus-Martan district. The former head of personal security R. Labazanov, with the blessing of Moscow, entrenched himself in the third most important city of the republic - Argun. A rather powerful consolidation of anti-Dudaev forces was created, which, with clever leadership, could force the Chechen president to abandon his previous course. But there was no such leadership.

In Chechnya itself, there was also no unanimous agreement. It is known that there was opposition to Dudayev, through whose efforts an anti-Dudaev coup was attempted on March 31, 1992, which was suppressed on the same day by armed groups loyal to the president. In the spring of 1993,

a second conflict broke out between Dudayev and the parliament of the republic, which was supported by the opposition. In Chechnya, a referendum on relations between the republic and Russia is ripe. At this time, B. N. Yeltsin issues a Decree "On the reform of military structures, border and internal troops on the territory of the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation and state support for the Cossacks." The delusional idea that irregular Cossacks can replace regular armed formations in such a turbulent region receives priority. This led to the fact that with the beginning of the Abkhazian-Georgian armed conflict, thousands of Chechens

calmly crossed the border of Russia and took part in it, honing their military skills.

On the last day of March 1993, the Chechen parliament adopts a resolution on the transfer under the jurisdiction of the republic of all military units, weapons and military equipment that had not been captured before that time. The command of the North Caucasian Military District addresses this issue to Moscow, but Defense Minister P. S. Grachev instructs to start negotiations with Dudayev. On April 15, a rally in

support of the referendum, organized by Moscow, began in Grozny and lasted 51 days. Three days later, the Chechen parliament meets to impeach Dudayev. 9 out of 41 deputies give up their mandates in accordance with the decree of the president of this republic, but in the evening of the same day the Constitutional Court recognizes Dudayev's decrees as unconstitutional. Russia is getting a unique chance to put an end to Chechen separatism on legal grounds. To do this, it is enough to morally support the protesters and warn Dudayev against the use of force against them. But the Kremlin is silent.



Stepashin Sergey Vadimovich, Director of the Federal Counterintelligence Service (1994–1995), Prime Minister of the Government of the Russian Federation (1999)

The Kremlin is silent even after the Chechen leader publicly declares that Boris Yeltsin is ready to put at his disposal two airborne regiments to disperse the protesters. After that, people go home on their own, and "national guardsmen" appear at key points in Grozny and other Chechen cities. In early June, D. Dudayev's supporters stormed Grozny's mayor's office and the building of the Central

Internal Affairs Directorate of the republic, his opponents lost more than 50 people killed and hundreds wounded. On the morning of June 4, the Chechen president brings tanks to the streets of Grozny and shoots up the building of the City Assembly, where the printed ballots of the referendum, which is no longer destined to take place, were stored. Dozens of dead and wounded. The conflict between the president of Ichkeria and the parliament ended with the dissolution of the latter. Moscow receives territory in the North Caucasus that is not subordinate to it, stuffed full of weapons and ready for war. A completely legitimate question arose: did Moscow know about this? Was elementary

reconnaissance carried out on the territory of Chechnya, to whom were its results reported? After all, it is well known that all self-respecting governments have always been involved in intelligence, and the Kremlin has always had intelligence structures at its disposal.

enough.

The answer to this question, like many others, is up in the air. Competent persons avoid him. The former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, General of the Army A.S. Kulikov, is one of the few high-ranking officials who dared to raise the topic of the First Chechen War. In his book "Heavy Stars", published in 2002, he writes: "Our ability to work within the (Chechen. - V.R.) republic itself was limited - intelligence of internal troops appeared only in 1994, - but neither We spared no effort and no time to follow bit by bit the general political situation in Chechnya." But below the general is enough

writes in detail about the crimes of the Chechens of a criminal nature, about the numerous facts of the Chechen genocide against the Russian-speaking population. Of course, the criminal theme is closer to A. S. Kulikov than some others. But why were the GRU, the General Staff, the Foreign Ministry, the FSB silent? Why didn't the Kremlin take any effective measures?

Eyewitnesses testify that, despite all the events that took place, by the autumn of 1993, a significant part of ordinary Chechens had not yet decided on their political views on the events taking place in the republic. People were deceived by propaganda, angered by economic difficulties, rampant crime, but they did not want war. The general mobilization announced by D. Dudayev failed. But preparations for war continued. Money was needed, and they came regularly from Moscow for salaries and pensions, but did not reach their destination. Money came from other sources as well. D. Dudayev cynically declared Russian funds as indemnity for the "centuries-old oppression" of the Chechen people and sent them to prepare for war. The Kremlin knew about it, but took no action.

Funds for a future war were obtained everywhere. Thus, according to official data, in the Grozny branch of the North Caucasian Railway in 1993 alone, 559 trains were attacked, with total or partial looting of about 4,000 wagons and containers worth 11.5 billion rubles. During the first half of 1994, 450 trains were attacked, wagons and containers worth more than 7 billion rubles were looted. During the first years of its existence, the Dudayev regime issued 10

trillion rubles worth of false advice notes, which were distributed throughout Russia. In the autumn of 1993, one of the Chechen criminal groups made in Turkey and brought into the country through Chechnya 10 billion rubles of counterfeit money. And how to measure the amount of theft by

Chechens on local oil and gas pipelines? Personnel were needed for the

upcoming war. They were recruited everywhere in Chechnya and other Muslim countries. Quite a few went to Chechnya and representatives of other concessions who wanted to try their luck with weapons in their hands on the side of the separatists. Thousands have become beyond the reach of Russian law enforcement agencies

criminals hiding in Chechnya, and all requests for their extradition by the Chechen authorities were frankly ignored. A good

reason for starting a war with the Dudaevites was the problem of refugees. The open genocide of Chechens against Russians and other nationalities forced hundreds of thousands of residents of the republic to leave its borders. So, if in 1990 450 thousand Russians lived in Checheno-Ingushetia, by 1995 there were no more than 110 thousand of them left there.

With the help of the federal center, an anti-Dudaev opposition was gradually created and armed in Chechnya. It included Chechens who, for various reasons, were late or were excommunicated from the division of power and material values at the first stage of the formation of Chechen independence. But the authority of the opposition in Chechnya itself was low - Dudayev and his supporters were not going to share power with anyone. Therefore, the anti-Dudaev opposition had no choice but to try to solve the matter by force. On September 19,

opposition armored personnel carriers broke into Grozny with a fight. But the oppositionists were not going to hold on to this city. Having solved a private problem, they left the city, taking trophies: several towed guns, the Grad installation, one tank and one prisoner - Usman Imaev, Dudayev's chief banker, finance minister and prosecutor general all rolled into one. A man well-versed in all the secret financial transactions of the Chechen leadership fell into the hands of the opposition. At first he was sent to Moscow, but after talking with Moscow officials, two weeks later he was returned back to Grozny. No one was able to see any documents about Imaev's conversations with representatives of the Russian authorities during his stay in Moscow.

The next assault on Grozny, undertaken on November 26 by the anti-Dudaev opposition with the involvement of the tanks of the Kantimirovsky division, ended in failure. Formidable combat vehicles found themselves defenseless in the narrow streets of the city under fire from pre-installed rockets from remote-launched Grad launchers. They burned through the tanks, and they burned like matchboxes. The advancing troops did not receive the promised air support. The impression was that each of the attempts of the opposition to overthrow the Dudayev regime is nothing more than

as a threat to the intractable ruler from the center or individual high officials. On the basis of all the above

facts, the Russian government concluded that the state of affairs in Chechnya was unfavorable and that decisive intervention in the processes taking place there was necessary. Decisiveness was also given by the assurances of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation about the ease of defeating the Dudayevites by force of arms. At a meeting with correspondents, P. S. Grachev said: "I am not very interested in what is happening there. The armed forces do not participate there ... I would never allow tanks to enter the city. This is wild illiteracy. And secondly, if the army fought, then one parachute regiment could solve everything within two hours. And a week later, he said the following: "The defeat of all this army is not a serious problem for the Russian group. True, we will apparently have to abandon such effective methods as massive air bombardment and artillery attacks. All this can lead to the death of civilians, which the troops will do their best to avoid in the event of a military operation.

Thus, the idea of deploying military operations in Chechnya with the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, most likely, began to be worked out only at the end of November 1994. By that time, the Russian command in the North Caucasus did not have at its disposal not only the necessary grouping of forces and means, but even a plan of specific actions. But there were plenty of personal ambitions of some high-ranking officials and passionate desires of other secret forces to draw Russia into the war in order to distract its people from other events taking place in the country. The Chechens

behaved frankly defiantly. At the end of 1993, Chechnya refused to take part in the Russian parliamentary elections. The Chechen Parliament opposed the inclusion in the new Russian Constitution of the provision on the Chechen Republic as a subject of the Russian Federation. Based on this, Moscow had the opportunity to talk about the intention of Dudayev and his entourage to drive a wedge into the integrity of the Russian Federation and set an example for other national entities within a sovereign state.

At the beginning of 1994, forces opposed to D. Dudayev made another attempt to attack the positions of the National Guard near

Grozny, but it also ended unsuccessfully. The leader of the group, I. Suleimanov, was captured by officers of the Chechen Security Department on February 9, after which the rebel group quickly

disintegrated. At the end of May 1994, an attempt was made to assassinate D. Dudayev, also unsuccessful. On the route of the motorcade of the Chechen president, a car was blown up, which was standing on the side of the road. The minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechnya,

his deputy and the driver were killed, but Dudayev remained unharmed. Nevertheless, the fact is that by the end of 1994, Dudayev managed to create and arm very numerous formations. According to various sources, they numbered about 40 thousand people. Some of the commanding staff of the Dudaevites had experience of military operations in Abkhazia, the rest acquired certain skills at various training camps and in numerous armed actions on the territory of Chechnya itself. In addition, in the service of the Chechen president, there were from 5 to 8 thousand mercenaries from countries near and far abroad. Their "combat work" was

In the current situation, on November 29, 1994, the Security Council of the Russian Federation considered the issue "On the restoration of constitutional legality, law and order and peace in the Chechen Republic." On the same day, the appeal of the President of the Russian Federation in connection with the events in Chechnya was published. On November 30, 1994, in connection with the prolongation of the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic, non-compliance with the requirements for a ceasefire, the surrender of weapons, the dissolution of armed formations, the release of all captured and forcibly held citizens, the death of the civilian population and in accordance with Article 88 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, a Decree was issued President of the Russian Federation "On measures to restore constitutional legality and law and order on the territory of the Chechen Republic". This decree created a group to manage actions to disarm and liquidate armed formations, introduce and maintain a state of emergency on the territory of the Chechen Republic, consisting of: P. S. Grachev (head), N. D. Egorova, V. F. Erin, A. S. Kruglova, A. S. Kulikova, A. I. Nikolaeva, V. N. Panicheva, B. I. Pastukhova, A. V. Starovoitova, S. V. Stepashina, P. P.

Shirshova, S. N. Yushenkova. In accordance with the decree, the Minister of Defense, as the head of the group, was given the appropriate rights and powers, which were known to a very limited circle of people.

There is evidence that the opinions of members of the Security Council regarding Russia's actions in Chechnya differed radically. Defense Minister P. Grachev allegedly warned of the difficulties that Russian troops would certainly face in Chechnya. He was not supported by Viktor Chernomyrdin and Ivan Rybkin, who saw an immediate invasion as the simplest way out of the situation. President Boris N. Yeltsin supported the latter.



Kulikov Anatoly Sergeevich, Commander of the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1992-1995), Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (1995-1997), General of the Army

Soon a plan for the upcoming operation was developed. The action plan determined the tasks of ministries and departments, the timing of their implementation. In particular, given the current situation and relying on the impossibility of resolving the conflict by political

means, the President of the Russian Federation entrusted the following tasks to the Joint Group of Forces: 1. Stabilize the situation in Chechnya. 2. Disarm illegal military formations. 3. Restore law and order in accordance with the legislative acts of the Russian Federation. To guide the actions to disarm and eliminate armed formations, to introduce and maintain a state of emergency on the territory of the Chechen Republic, a leadership group was created headed by Minister of Defense P. S. Grachev. It also included Minister of Internal Affairs V.F. Yerin, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs A.S. Kulikov, Commander-in-Chief of the Border Troops A.I. Nikolaev, Director of the Federal Counterintelligence Service S.V. Stepashin, Deputy Prosecutor General - Chief Military Prosecutor V. I. Panichev and others. To accomplish the assigned tasks, it was decided to conduct a special operation by the forces of the Ministry of Defense in cooperation with the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSK (Federal Counterintelligence Service) of Russia. Apparently, there was no clear plan for this operation, at least the interaction of diverse forces and means was not coordinated, which in itself is a crime against the elementary laws of military art.



Leonid Shevtsov, Chief of Staff of the Joint Command of Russian Forces in the Caucasus

Let us refer to the testimony of General of the Army A. S. Kulikov, at that time the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Russia. He writes that at the beginning of November 1994, at a meeting held in the office of S. Stepashin on Lubyanka, he heard the superficial opinion of the Chief of the General Staff M. Kolesnikov regarding the military operation of the federal forces, which was planned to be carried out in Chechnya. He writes that "at the end of the summer, a decision was made obliging the General Staff to plan options for a military-technical solution for restoring constitutional order in Chechnya. I knew about this and immediately sent the generals responsible for this problem a plan that had once been developed in the Main Directorate of the Commander of the Internal Troops and met all the requirements of the current situation ... This plan, of course, was taken, but our specialists were sent home: few people needed it as well as our cooperation in this matter. Another version of the plan created

The General Staff and accepted for execution, I saw only in December, when we entered Chechnya together, both the army and the internal troops ... "

Any relatively literate person in military terms is well aware that before giving a command to the commander of a company or battalion for any action as part of a major military operation, this operation must not only be drawn in all details and calculated on a map, but a whole range of measures must be carried out for its preparation. Dozens and hundreds of commanders and staffs must certainly be involved in this work. But how could it happen that the headquarters of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not know about the plans of the General Staff - in this situation it is completely incomprehensible.



Kolesnikov Mikhail Petrovich, Chief of the General Staff (1992–1996),
General of the Army

True, later the federal leadership officially announced that the operation was planned in detail by specialists

various ministries and departments and was prepared for implementation in four stages.

At the first stage, it was envisaged within six days (from November 30 to December 6) to create a grouping of forces and means of the Ministry of Defense, internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for operations in three directions: Mozdok, Vladikavkaz and Kizlyar. By that time, front-line aviation and combat helicopters were to be relocated to the airfields of use and completely block the airspace over Chechnya, and electronic warfare equipment should begin to suppress the control system of Dudayev's armed formations.

At the second stage (December 7-9), it was planned to move forward to Grozny along five routes and block it under the cover of front-line and army aviation under the cover of front-line and army aviation. The troops were to create two encirclement rings: the outer one along the administrative border of the republic and the inner one around its capital. It was decided to concentrate the main efforts of the troops on the blockade of Grozny and the disarmament of illegal Chechen armed formations. The forces

and means of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation were ordered, following the military groupings, to protect communications and routes of advance. They were supposed to prevent the actions of illegal armed groups and prevent the approaches of armed groups and detachments from the territories adjacent to Chechnya, and then, together with units of the Armed Forces, go to the lines of blocking Grozny.

The Federal Counterintelligence Service of Russia, together with the special forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was faced with the task of identifying and isolating senior officials of state structures of Chechnya, leaders of opposition parties capable of leading armed uprisings and sabotage in the rear of the active troops.

At the third stage (December 10–13), formations and units of military groupings were ordered to seize the “presidential palace”, government buildings, television, radio and other important objects of Grozny by actions from the north and south with a demarcation line along the Sunzha River.

At the fourth stage (December 14-21), it was planned to stabilize the situation in the republic by joint military and administrative measures, transferring areas of responsibility to the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian

Federation. Thus, according to the plans of the Russian leadership, 20 to 25 days were allotted for the entire operation and it was envisaged to involve significant forces and means of the army, internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSK. Against this background, Defense Minister P. Grachev's statement about the possibility of capturing Grozny by one regiment of the Airborne Forces looks absolutely ridiculous. True, the reliability of this plan, made public only at the beginning of March

1995, can also be questioned ... There is no doubt about the complete strategic incompetence of the leadership that decided to conduct a military operation. Many objective and subjective factors were not taken into account. By that time, the Russian troops of all departments were in an extremely poor condition, which was aggravated by the mass dismissal of soldiers and sergeants who had served their term of active service, and the recruitment of recruits who were completely unfamiliar with military affairs. It was these guys who had the bitter fate of becoming victims of a new war.

In accordance with the plan, the General Staff, together with representatives of the interacting ministries and departments, began preparing the operation in a very short time, despite the fact that the planning of such an operation was practically carried out for the first time and had a number of features.

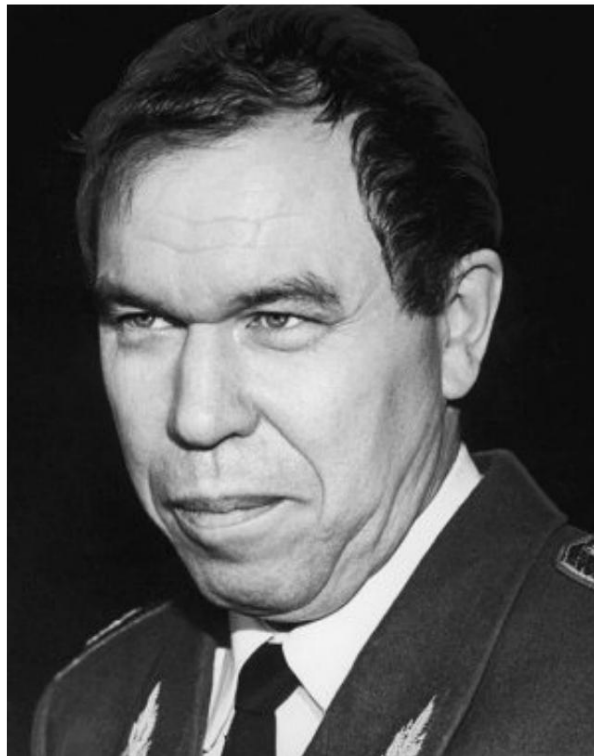
Firstly, formations and units of four types of the Armed Forces, border and internal troops, forces and means of the Federal Grid Company were used to carry out the operation. Secondly, such operations with the involvement of forces and means that differ in the specifics of solving the tasks assigned to them were not previously carried out on the territory of Russia, and in fact the law enforcement agencies had no experience in preparing and conducting them. Thirdly, the combat mission had to be carried out on the territory of one of the republics of the Russian Federation, which required extraordinary and non-standard solutions

during its preparation. To assist the leadership of the North Caucasian Military District in planning and preparing for the operation, organizing

interaction and coordination of actions of power ministries and departments from the Ministry of Defense, an operational group was created headed by the Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff, Lieutenant General L.P. Shevtsov. On November 30, she arrived in Mozdok and set to work.

The direct management of planning, preparation and conduct of hostilities was entrusted to the commander of the North Caucasian Military District (SKVO). The detailed development of the plan for the use of troops in accordance with the directive was ordered to be completed by December 5, 1994. By the same date, the complex of measures for the direct preparation of troops for solving problems was also completed.

Initially, an insignificant number of forces and means were involved in the operation, mainly from the Ministry of Defense, as well as internal troops. The group consisted of combined detachments of two motorized rifle divisions, a separate motorized rifle brigade, combined regiments of two airborne divisions, two separate airborne brigades, as well as seven separate regiments of internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Ensuring the actions of ground forces from the air was entrusted to a helicopter regiment stationed in Mozdok.



Rokhlin Lev Yakovlevich, commander of the group of Russian troops during the storming of Grozny in 1995, lieutenant general

The offensive was to be carried out simultaneously from three directions along five routes. General A. S. Kulikov in his book "Heavy Stars" sets out in sufficient detail the composition of these groups. He writes that group No. 1 was supposed to operate in the Mozdok direction under the command of the first deputy commander of the troops of the North Caucasian Military District, Lieutenant General V. M. Chilindin. It included a consolidated detachment of the 131st motorized rifle brigade, the 481st anti-aircraft missile regiment of the 19th motorized rifle division, an engineer-sapper battalion of the 170th engineer-sapper brigade, a consolidated detachment of the 22nd separate special-purpose brigade, a combined paratrooper regiment 106th Airborne Division, combined paratrooper battalion of the 56th separate airborne brigade, 59th, 81st and 451st operational regiments and the 193rd operational separate battalion of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. In total, a little more than 6.5 thousand personnel, 41 tanks, 99 armored personnel carriers, 132 combat vehicles (BMP and BMD), 54 guns and mortars operated in the Mozdok direction. In the Vladikavkaz direction, group No. 2 was created

under the command of the deputy commander of the airborne troops, Lieutenant General A. A. Chindarov. It included a combined detachment of the 19th motorized rifle division, an anti-aircraft missile battalion of the 933rd separate anti-aircraft missile regiment of the 42nd army corps, a combined parachute regiment of the 76th airborne division, a combined parachute regiment of the 21st separate airborne brigade, the 46th and 47th operational regiments and the 7th special forces detachment of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. In total, about 4 thousand personnel, 14 helicopters, 34 tanks, 67 armored personnel carriers, 98 combat vehicles (BMP and BMD), 62 guns and mortars operated in this direction.



Fighters have no nationality

Group No. 3 was deployed in the Kizlyar direction under the command of the commander of the 8th Guards Army Corps, Lieutenant General L. Ya. Rokhlin. It included a combined detachment of the 20th motorized rifle division, the 49th, 57th and 63rd regiments of the operational subordination of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. In total, a little over 4 thousand personnel, 16 helicopters, 7 tanks, 162 armored personnel carriers, 28 guns and mortars.



“I will take Grozny with one airborne regiment...”

Thus, it turned out that by the beginning of the operation, the Joint Group of Federal Forces in Chechnya consisted of about 24 thousand personnel, 90 helicopters (of which 47 were combat), 80 tanks, several hundred armored personnel carriers and combat vehicles (BMP and BMD) , 182 guns and mortars.

Already from the list of these forces and means, it becomes clear that the forces of the Ground Forces, Airborne Forces and Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were involved in the operation. All of them have the specifics of their combat

applications, and therefore the interaction between them must be organized with particular care. In addition, in this operation, the use of consolidated detachments that did not pass the necessary combat knocking together was widely practiced. It is always very difficult to manage such formations, despite the fact that their combat capabilities are severely limited. Therefore, in this case, the issues of organizing interaction and management are brought to the fore. According to numerous eyewitnesses, these questions were not worked out. Official sources in Moscow later

claimed that during the preparation of the operation, the leadership of the Russian Federation made efforts to resolve the Chechen crisis by peaceful means through negotiations. To this end, on December 6, in Mozdok, PS Grachev met with the leaders of the anti-Dudaev opposition, and then with Dudayev himself. According to the Minister of Defense, Dudayev realized the hopelessness of his situation in the development of events with the introduction of troops into Chechnya. At the same time, he unequivocally explained that he was a hostage of his entourage and could not fulfill the demands placed on him for unconditional disarmament and the disbandment of armed formations. In connection with the current situation, on December 9, a Decree of the President of the Russian

Federation "On measures to suppress the activities of illegal armed groups on the territory of the Chechen Republic and in the zone of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict" was issued. On the same day, the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation "On the disarmament of illegal armed formations on the territory of the Chechen Republic by force" was adopted.

On the basis of these documents, the procedure for performing tasks was clarified and, by directive of the Minister of Defense, brought to the commander of the North Caucasus Military District. The latter was instructed to plan a special operation to block the territory of the Chechen Republic. At the same time, it was necessary to provide for two lines (rings) of blocking: the first around Grozny, the second - the occupation by troops of advantageous lines along the administrative border of the republic. The decision of the commander of the North Caucasian Military District was personally approved by Russian Defense Minister Pavel

Grachev. Readiness for the advancement of troops was determined by the morning of December 11,

1994. Now about the order of work of the commander, commanders and staffs under preparation for this operation.

On December 5, Minister of Defense P. S. Grachev flew to Mozdok, where he heard the commander of the troops of the North Caucasian Military District, Colonel General A. Mityukhin, and ordered to complete the planning of the operation by 2 p.m. the next day.

On December 6, at 2 pm, the operation plan was approved, and in the evening of the same day, P. S. Grachev left for a meeting with D. Dudayev. By the end of the day, the concentration of troops in the starting areas was generally completed.

On December 7, groupings of troops were created in areas. On December 8, a review of the readiness of the units was held. On December 10, the order of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation "On the formation of the Joint Group of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, disarming armed formations on the territory of the Chechen Republic" was issued. These data show the haste with which groupings of troops were created and the planning of the operation was carried out. True, later official sources reported that in terms of preparing the upcoming operation, work was carried out to organize interaction. In the district-grouping link, such work was carried out on December 6–7 on a layout of the area by the chief of staff with the participation of officers of the General Staff and the Ministry of Defense. 10 days were allotted for additional training of units and subunits, their combat coordination in the areas of concentration. The main work on the organization of interaction in the link squad - platoon - company - battalion was carried out on December 8-9 with practical exercises on the material

parts.

But how was it possible to organize the interaction of forces and means in such conditions? Officers and soldiers for a long time, or even not engaged in combat training at all, who had never performed combat missions in the mountains and in the city, who did not know the tactics of counter-guerrilla warfare, should, according to Russian officials, acquire all the necessary skills in just ten days! But most likely, they did not have this time either. Recall that in the period of the USSR, before being sent to Afghanistan, personnel were trained on the territory of the USSR for six months and

another 2-3 months in the host country itself before being sent to combat operations, and the preparation of each significant operation took several months.

D. Dudayev's reaction to the decrees of the Russian president was unequivocal. He prepared for war, recruited allies, worked out tactics for the upcoming military operations. Evidence of this is the interception of a telephone conversation between the President of Chechnya and a resident of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, also a former Soviet general, Sufiyan Bepaev, who was in Nalchik, on December 9, 1994. In a conversation, Dudayev demanded from his colleague the opening of a partisan struggle front in the rear of the Russian troops. "I can give operational data on the composition of these groups, how many and where, and in proportion to them, how they

will move, where they will go," Dudayev assured his comrade. "They need to hit hard from the rear. The primordial tactics of the highlanders "raid - retreat, raid - retreat" to exhaust them until they themselves die of fear and horror. Raid - retreat, raid - retreat ... It was a specific plan for guerrilla warfare, which the Chechen side developed based on knowledge of the situation and the enemy's plan. As a result of the implementation of this plan, the entire

territory of the republic was to turn into a continuous front of the struggle against the Russian troops, which included only fighting in Grozny and border control. The plan for the deployment of a guerrilla war in Chechnya should have alerted, but could no longer stop the Russian leadership, confident in a quick and easy victory. Practice quickly dispelled this confidence, forcing to pay for it with the lives and health of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of ordinary Russian guys.

crawling

By the end of 1994, D. Dudayev managed to create his own fairly combat-ready armed forces numbering up to 30 thousand people, some of whose personnel underwent not only military training in specially created camps, but also fought in Afghanistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, Transnistria. Among the Chechen soldiers there were a large number of mercenaries and repeat offenders hiding from Russian justice. The republic was well-armed, only after the Soviet Army more than 40 thousand small arms were captured there, in addition, there were many foreign-made weapons, hunting rifles. In Grozny, the production of the Boriz (Wolf) machine gun was launched. In addition, there were 130 armored vehicles, about 200 artillery systems, including 18 Grad installations. This weapon could equip an army of up to 60 thousand people. Its formations were located not only in Grozny, but also in Shali, Argun, Gudermes, Petropavlovsk. In other settlements, there were local armed groups, which were created under the guise of self-defense units. Thus, the Chechen Republic was ready for resistance and a long guerrilla war, which the Russian command did not take into account in its plans.

The offensive of the federal troops began on the morning of December 11, 1994. Another episode is connected with its beginning, about which A.S. Kulikov narrates in his book "Heavy Stars" and which speaks eloquently of the confusion that reigned in the Russian troops. A. S. Kulikov writes that he fell asleep already at the beginning of December 11, being sure that the operation would begin at 5 o'clock in the morning of that day. "I get up ten minutes before five, wait for a signal - there is no signal. I feel that something happened, something went wrong... I called the command post of the army: there the head of the operations department of the North Caucasus Military District, Major General Vyunov, picked up the phone. "Yuri Ivanovich," I ask, "why didn't the troops begin to act? Why is there no signal? To be honest, Vyunov's answer surprised me: "Don't you know? .. In

At one in the morning, as soon as you left, Mityukhin asked Grachev to reschedule the start of the operation for 8:00. At exactly eight we start..."



The beginning of the war. December 1994

Then I could not stand it, suffered a desperate obscenity: "What are you doing? Don't you know that today is Sunday, which means that the intersection in Nazran, where the car market is, will be packed with cars from eight o'clock? Troops won't get through there!.." Vyunov replied: "I can't do anything now – this is the commander's decision. Now he is resting. If you want to talk to him, call later." So, the operation began three hours later than planned. The command of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was not notified about the

postponement, of course, the commanders of units and subunits did not know about it either. The offensive was carried out simultaneously in three directions. With the beginning of the advance, the Western grouping met resistance on the territory of Ingushetia, where the population blocked the routes of the

troops. The first victims of the war were brought on the Ingush land. A column of the 19th motorized rifle division was attacked in Nazran and suffered losses in personnel and equipment. 17 vehicles were burned, most of which were ambulances and communication vehicles. Doctors, including women, suffered. IN

in total, federal troops lost 47 pieces of equipment on the territory of Ingushetia. In the village of

Yardynka, local residents burned 15 units of military equipment, including one tank. As a result of all these unaccounted for obstacles, the columns were forced to slow down and stop on some routes. At the same time, the lack of interaction between the Armed Forces and parts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation affected. So, the combined regiment of the 76th

airborne division and the 21st separate airborne brigade were stopped by the inhabitants of the Upper Achaluk, who lay down on the road and did not let the column through. The indecision of the command, which did not take any measures to bypass the settlement, led to the fact that the column had to be returned to its original position.

The columns of the combined regiment of the 106th airborne division and the 56th separate airborne brigade on the advance routes on December 12 were hit by two multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) from the area of the settlement of Dolinsky. As a result, 6 people died and 12 were injured, one was destroyed and two combat and four auxiliary vehicles were damaged. This case was the result of poor

march planning and departmental disunity of the operational-tactical command. Later it turned out that the deployment of multiple launch rocket systems and enemy tanks had been detected in advance from fire support helicopters assigned to cover the convoy from the air. But the helicopter pilots, referring to the prohibition of their command, not only did not strike at the Chechens, but also did not warn the covered troops about their presence. On December 11, near the Dagestan city of Khasavyurt, a column of the battalion

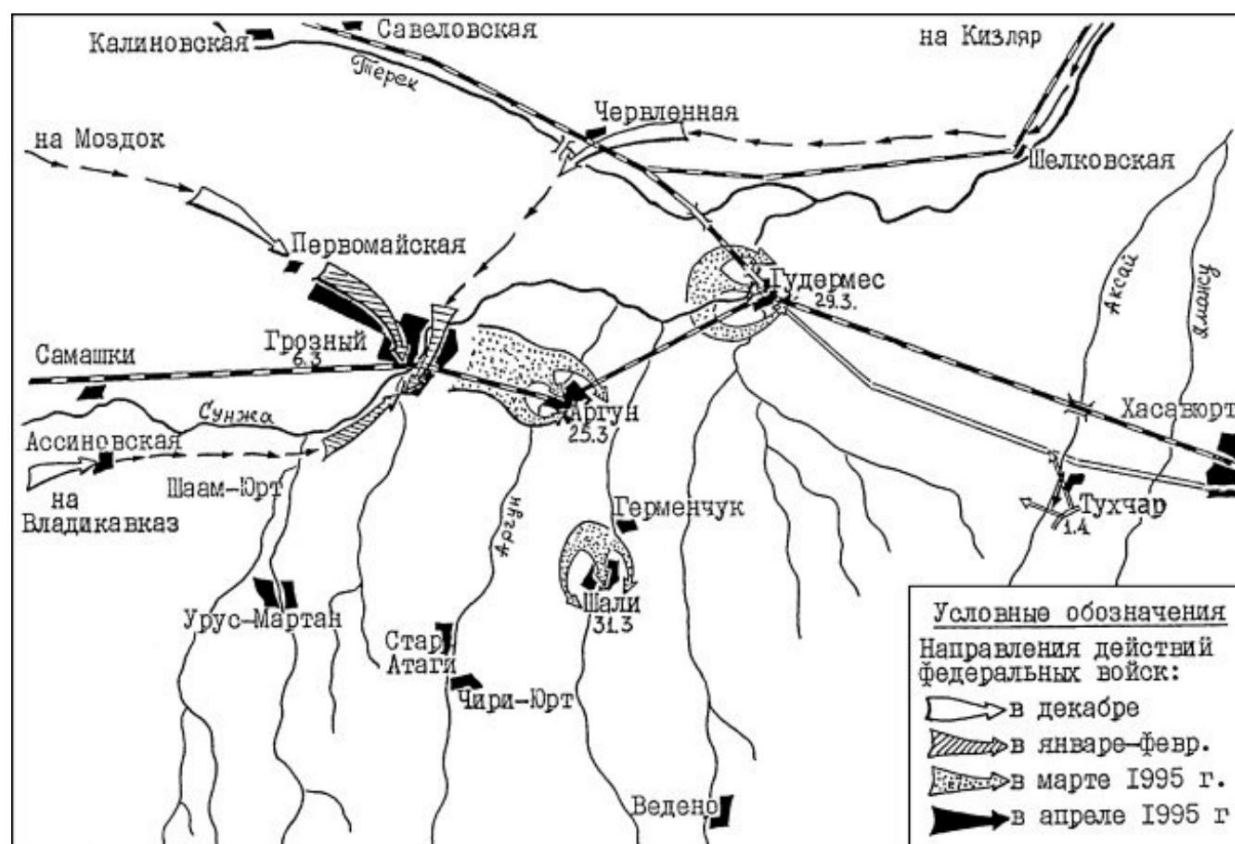
of the Nizhny Novgorod operational regiment was blocked by women and teenagers, then armed men appeared. The column stopped, riots began. As a result, 58 servicemen were taken hostage, four armored personnel carriers and one truck were captured and hijacked. Later it turned out that Akkin Chechens were operating there.

On December 12, 1994, one of the regiments of the operational purpose of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs went to the area of the mountain village of Barkhoi, where he occupied

all-round defense. He received the task of occupying the settlement of Dolinsky and subsequently reaching the northwestern outskirts of Grozny.

According to intelligence, a large group of armed supporters of D. Dudayev in the amount of up to 400 people with two multiple rocket launchers was in the village of Dolinsky, another 100 militants took up defense in the village of Kerla-Yurt, and a detachment of up to 40 people with a tank, combat vehicle infantry and one twin anti-aircraft gun was stationed in the area of the oil refinery. All enemy positions relied on stone structures and were well prepared for all-round defense. To accomplish this task, the unit was divided into several battalion tactical groups,

each of which received a specific combat mission. Combat helicopters were supposed to provide fire support for the advance of the ground troops, but their approach was delayed due to bad weather. Therefore, on December 13, the battalions, having reached their starting position and after waiting there for more than five hours, were forced to return. And so it went on for five days.



Only on the morning of December 17, the long-awaited helicopters finally appeared in the sky. The regiment received another command to prepare for the offensive. While the infantry occupied their original positions, the helicopters attacked the enemy. An oil refinery broke out, and the militants defending there were forced to leave its territory without a fight and retreat to the settlement of Dolinsky, reinforcing the detachment located there.

The offensive of the units of the regiment began at 12 o'clock on December 17. Encountering no organized resistance, one of the tactical groups occupied Kerla-Yurt almost without a fight, where it went on the defensive.

The other two battalion tactical groups advancing on Dolinsky also went on the offensive at 12 o'clock on December 17. But already 15 minutes after that, the weather conditions changed dramatically: a thick fog descended, limiting visibility to 5–6 m. The helicopters could not operate, and the advancing units were met by heavy enemy fire and soon stopped moving forward. It turned out that, due to the presence of a large number of canals and swampy areas, it was not possible to deploy units from marching to battle formation. One of the tactical groups was forced to deploy their combat vehicles and return back. But the second tactical group acted more successfully. Her advanced unit broke into a dairy farm, also left without a fight by

the militants. After that, having deployed vehicles in a battle line, the tactical group at 13 o'clock began an offensive on Dolinsky. However, on the outskirts of this settlement, she fell into the zone of fire prepared in advance by Dudayev and was also forced to stop the offensive and go on the defensive.

The militants were set up not only to conduct passive defense. Convinced that the federal troops had stopped their advance on Dolinsky, they sent one of their groups to their rear. But this maneuver of the enemy was detected in time and thwarted by the fire of several combat vehicles, which advanced to the threatened direction.

Refusing to sorties, the militants began to fire at the positions of the federal troops with mortars and small arms. In view of the dissipated fog, enemy snipers clearly acted.



At the crossroads

Beginning to get dark. The federal command, apparently realizing the futility of continuing the battle in such conditions at night, decided to withdraw all tactical groups from the battle and take them to a safe distance. By 4 p.m., all units of the regiment were assembled in the designated area and moved to all-round defense, leaving behind an oil refinery and a dairy farm. During the battle, the regiment lost one infantry fighting vehicle and 13 people were wounded.

In other directions, the federal troops acted more successfully, but they also encountered many difficulties along the way. On the night of December 20, 1994, the commander of a separate reconnaissance battalion operating as part of the grouping of General L. Rokhlin received the task of seizing the bridge over the Sunzha River in the area of the village of Petropavlovskaya by 11 o'clock on the same day and ensuring the unimpeded movement of the column of the 104th Airborne Division along the road Tolstoy-Yurt - Argun. The passage of the division was expected four hours after the capture of the bridge.

Federal intelligence found that there were up to a hundred militants armed with small arms in the Petropavlovskaya area. In addition, the Dudaevites had five armored personnel carriers and several mortars.

The battalion commander decided to attack the enemy on the move. To do this, on the basis of each company, battle groups were created, which were supposed to operate on independent routes. At the decisive moment of the battle, the forces of all units were to concentrate for a decisive blow in the main direction.

But time was not provided for reconnaissance of the enemy and the terrain in the depths of the enemy defense. After receiving the task after 40 minutes, the battalion commander gave the order to the company commanders. The launch time was set for 4:30 pm on December 20th.

The advance of the battalion began at the indicated time. The weather contributed to this - it was snowing heavily. At 0445 hours, having reached the indicated line, the personnel dismounted and continued the offensive in this order. Ahead was a combat reconnaissance patrol. When approaching the

bridge, it was found that the approaches were blocked by a minefield. It was decided not to advance through the minefield, but to try to bypass the bridge. At the same time, an artillery raid was carried out on the enemy. The plan succeeded. At 7 o'clock in the

morning one of the battle groups captured the bridge. But behind the bridge, she was met by heavy enemy fire. At this time, the Chechens tried to blow up the bridge, under which an explosive charge had been placed in advance. Saved by chance - the tank of the federals with a caterpillar damaged the wire laid to the detonator. At this time, other tactical groups were able to reach the

outskirts of the village of Petropavlovskaya and gain a foothold in the stone buildings there. The militants resisted fiercely, and one of the groups of Chechens even tried to go to the rear of the federal troops.

Soon the federal troops felt the lack of ammunition, the main stock of which was deep in the rear. In this regard, the battalion commander decided to stop the attack, withdraw to the line of the road and gain a foothold. The bridge remained in the hands of the federal command, but the village of Petropavlovskaya was in the hands of the enemy.

Promotion deep into the Chechen territory was given with great difficulty. Nevertheless, the decisive actions of the commanders of the 8th Army Corps, Lieutenant General L. Rokhlin and the 131st Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade, Colonel A. Savin, made it possible to fulfill the tasks facing the troops. They diverted most of the armed formations of D. Dudayev and thereby greatly facilitated the actions of the troops on the southern routes of movement. IN

Subsequently, this made it possible to block Grozny from the north, east, west, and thereby interrupt the supply of materiel, ammunition to the city and the transfer of militants from the territory of Dagestan. Later, the federal command said that the southern part of Grozny was "specially" left free for the exit of civilians and armed detachments who would like to surrender their weapons and stop resistance. But there are practically no such

it turned out...

A. S. Kulikov writes: "With great difficulty, the troops went to Grozny from the side of Argun and the village of Petropavlovskaya. Even a cursory glance at the map was enough to understand that by the end of December we had not been able to block half of Grozny along the perimeter ... And it turned out that by the time of the assault, the militants had the opportunity to freely feed their units with equipment, people, weapons and ammunition ... "Thus , it took the federal troops sixteen days to advance and block Grozny instead

of three according to the plan. First of all, the miscalculations of the top strategic and operational leadership, which did not take into account the possibility of organized resistance to troops along the routes, had an effect. Neither the president, nor the defense minister, nor even the commander of the North Caucasian military district knew the history of the Caucasian wars between Russia and the highlanders, they did not know the character of the Chechens, the peculiarities of the region on which they were going to conduct a military operation. The State Duma of the Russian Federation also took an incomprehensible position, which at the very

beginning of the operation, despite the growing resistance of the Caucasians, on December 13 adopted a resolution "On declaring an amnesty for persons involved in illegal acts related to the armed conflict in the North Caucasus." After that, on December 15, the Chechen delegation at the talks in Vladikavkaz categorically refused to negotiate with Russia and put forward demands that it recognize Chechnya as an independent state. On the same day, B. N. Yeltsin made a new appeal to the Chechens, in which he called on them to sit down at the negotiating table again, emphasizing, in the opinion of the highlanders, his weakness, and on December 21 he published a new appeal. Thus, the actions of Russian politicians who swung at

the enemy with a sword, but constantly weakening the blow, were exceptionally

illiterate. The military command was no better. Colonel-General Aleksei Mityukhin, commander of the troops of the North Caucasian Military District, directly responsible for the operation, having learned from the bitter experience of others when the political leadership of the country betrayed commanders under pressure from "democrats", refused to sign directives to the troops on conducting military operations in Chechnya, said he was ill and departed for Rostov-on-Don for "treatment". Then, on December 21, Russian Defense Minister P. S. Grachev personally took over the leadership of the operation, appointing Lieutenant General A. V. Kvashnin as his deputy - commander of the United Group of Federal Forces. Lieutenant General L.P. Shevtsov was appointed chief of staff of the Operational Group of Forces. A. S. Kulikov writes: "I knew Kvashnin as a strong-willed officer ... Among his obvious shortcomings, according to past experience, I counted a certain craving for verbosity and a clear unwillingness to work out the smallest details of any operation." It would also be useful to recall that none of the highest military commanders has ever planned or carried out such operations.



Tanks entered the mountains

Many shortcomings were also revealed in the actions of the troops and headquarters. So, in the course of the march, commanders of all levels made little use of their regular and attached reconnaissance equipment, completely shifting this task to army aviation. Despite the planning carried out during the preparation of the operation, the use of reconnaissance units of the Ground Forces, during the operation itself, some commanders and headquarters of the active formations and units assigned reconnaissance units and subunits non-specific tasks for them to capture and hold important objects, escort individual columns.

There were shortcomings in the training of officers. Most of the officers have lost commanding skills in managing deployed units. Many had no experience in working on radio communications and negotiating over open channels using control signals and signal-code tables.

The task of electronic suppression of enemy radio control networks was not completed. As a result, the Dudayevites, using space communications systems, were in charge of the air, transmitting information about the situation and the movements of Russian troops.

The slow and incomplete blockade of Grozny allowed the militants to turn the city into a powerful fortified area, preparing it for defense. Additional armed formations were introduced there, weapons, ammunition and other materiel needed for prolonged hostilities were brought in.

In the course of performing combat missions, the issue of their technical support was poorly resolved by heterogeneous forces. The tank and artillery units attached to the Airborne Forces units did not have their own evacuation means. The evacuation means of the Airborne Forces units were not ready for the evacuation of heavy weapons of the ground forces.

An analysis of the use of means of destruction clearly highlighted a number of problems that affected the combat effectiveness of rocket and artillery weapons, technical reconnaissance equipment, and automated control systems. The question arose of providing troops with night vision devices and night sights,

and reconnaissance and special units - with special weapons. All these shortcomings in the complex led to a decrease in the rate of advancement of troops, to the disruption of planned deadlines and the appearance of unjustified losses. As a result, the first stage of the operation showed its complete unpreparedness. But in the reports of the Russian generals victorious notes sounded.



Another volley...

Later, military analysts would identify many shortcomings in the planning and conduct of military operations by the federal command. They were obvious from the very beginning to any competent specialist. But those who made decisions preferred not to think about the shortcomings. We needed a war, and a big war, and for a long time. Therefore, everything was done not in the interests of a quick victory, but rather the opposite. The law of military art states that the

key to the successful completion of any operational or combat mission is to determine the rational sequence and appropriate methods for defeating the enemy, as well as the composition of the forces and means necessary for it.

solutions. The basis should be a comprehensive analysis and consideration of all influencing factors. When planning a special operation, many of the above were not taken into account.

So, when creating a grouping of troops, their condition was not taken into account. Consolidated units and crews accounted for 80%. Combat training was required in order to coordinate crews and units, and conduct staff training. The haste in preparing for the operation could not provide the necessary training of the troops.

Miscalculations in planning can be traced in the very concept of the operation. It omitted issues that provided for the establishment of permanent control over the territory of the whole of Chechnya. This would deprive the illegal armed formations of the opportunity to maneuver their forces and means.

The task of seizing a profitable frontier in order to prevent the approach of fresh forces of militants to Grozny became a priority. Such a task was assigned to one of the airborne battalions under the command of Major A.V. Kardychkin. It was supposed to block the access of militants along the route Gudermes - Argun - Grozny. Dudayevites did not want to give up their positions.

The battalion of paratroopers took possession of the indicated line on the move, losing 12 people killed, 20 wounded and four combat vehicles. After that, the federal troops temporarily went on the defensive.



Fighting weekdays

The militants retreated to the opposite bank of the Argun River, where they entrenched themselves. According to intelligence data, the number of the garrison of the city of Argun reached 300 people, who, in addition to small arms, were armed with six tanks, two self-propelled artillery installations and several installations of anti-tank guided missiles. Tanks and self-propelled guns were used as nomadic guns, reinforcing the defenses based on stone city structures and trench lines.



So that the enemy does not notice

The enemy defense was active. In addition to holding the occupied lines, the Chechens almost every night made sorties and unexpectedly fired at the federal troops at close range, inflicting losses on them: every night the battalion lost 2-3 people killed and wounded. There was only one way out - to take the opposite bank of the river and knock out the enemy from there. The transition to the offensive was scheduled for 5 o'clock in the morning on February 7, 1995. Five hours were allotted to complete the combat mission. In order to achieve the surprise of the offensive, artillery preparation for the attack was not provided. Artillery and aviation were supposed to join the support of the paratroopers only after the start of the battle in the depths of the enemy's defenses.

The beginning of the attack was preceded by the actions of a reconnaissance platoon, which was supposed to open the enemy's firing points. And although this task was successfully completed, the question of achieving tactical surprise in the offensive was immediately removed from the agenda.

At 5 o'clock in the morning the main forces of the battalion went on the offensive. One of the companies by 11 o'clock took possession of Komsomolsk. The second also successfully crossed to the opposite bank of the Argun River. The battalion completed the combat mission assigned to it.

But the militants, who by that time had fully recovered from the first blows, began to put up stubborn resistance. As a result of the launch of an anti-tank missile, one tank was hit, and the losses among the personnel were large. Chechen snipers worked skillfully, knocking out one soldier after another. The battalion, operating at a front of up to five kilometers, was unable to resist the enemy and asked for help from the regiment commander. However, all the forces of the regiment were involved in the battle in Grozny.



Only forward

Only at about 1 pm aviation appeared in the sky, which began to deliver bombing and assault strikes on Argun. Using air strikes, the battalion units took a more advantageous position and opened fire on the enemy. As a result of the firefight, which ended at 14:00, the paratroopers forced the militants to stop active resistance and go over to the passive defense of Argun. In that

In the battle, the paratroopers lost 4 people killed, 8 wounded and one tank. The losses of the militants could not be established, 6 corpses of Chechens were found on the banks of the Argun, 6 more people were killed by snipers. A self-propelled artillery mount was captured and a large ammunition depot was destroyed. In mid-January

1995, all the efforts of the federal troops were aimed at blocking Grozny and the outer border of the Chechen Republic. And the fact that the Dudayevites acted throughout the territory, including in such large settlements as Argun, Gudermes, Shali, Shatoi, Bamut, Samashki, was not taken into account. Therefore, miscalculations arose in the definition of combat missions, which led to the fact that none of the three groupings of troops was able to timely reach Grozny and block it. Instead, the troops faced strong opposition from the militants as well as from the local population. As a result,

from the very beginning of the operation, adjustments had to be made to its plan, and this led to a loss of time and surprise, made it possible for the Dudayevites to prepare Grozny for the defense, to create a number of strongholds along the routes of advance of the federal troops. In reality, Grozny was blocked only on December 28, 1994. He could not ensure the full implementation of the presidential decree and the composition of the group of federal troops. At the time of the beginning

of the operation, it numbered about 16 thousand people. By the end of hostilities in Chechnya, the grouping of federal troops had almost tripled, but even this was not enough. For comparison: the number of troops of the Red Army and the NKVD, which were involved in the deportation of Chechens and Ingush in 1944, was 200 thousand people.

It was also a serious miscalculation that the plan of the operation did not provide for close coordination of the actions of diverse and multi-departmental forces and means of the combined group of troops of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the FSB and the FPS.

"Meeting" of the new, 1995 in Grozny

According to an established tradition, no one knows by whom and when, the largest awards to military leaders were always awarded for capturing cities. Therefore, the fate of Ivan the Terrible seemed to have been predetermined from the very beginning. Inevitably, the time had come to decide the fate of the Chechen capital, which had been turned by the Dudaevites into a powerful fortified area.

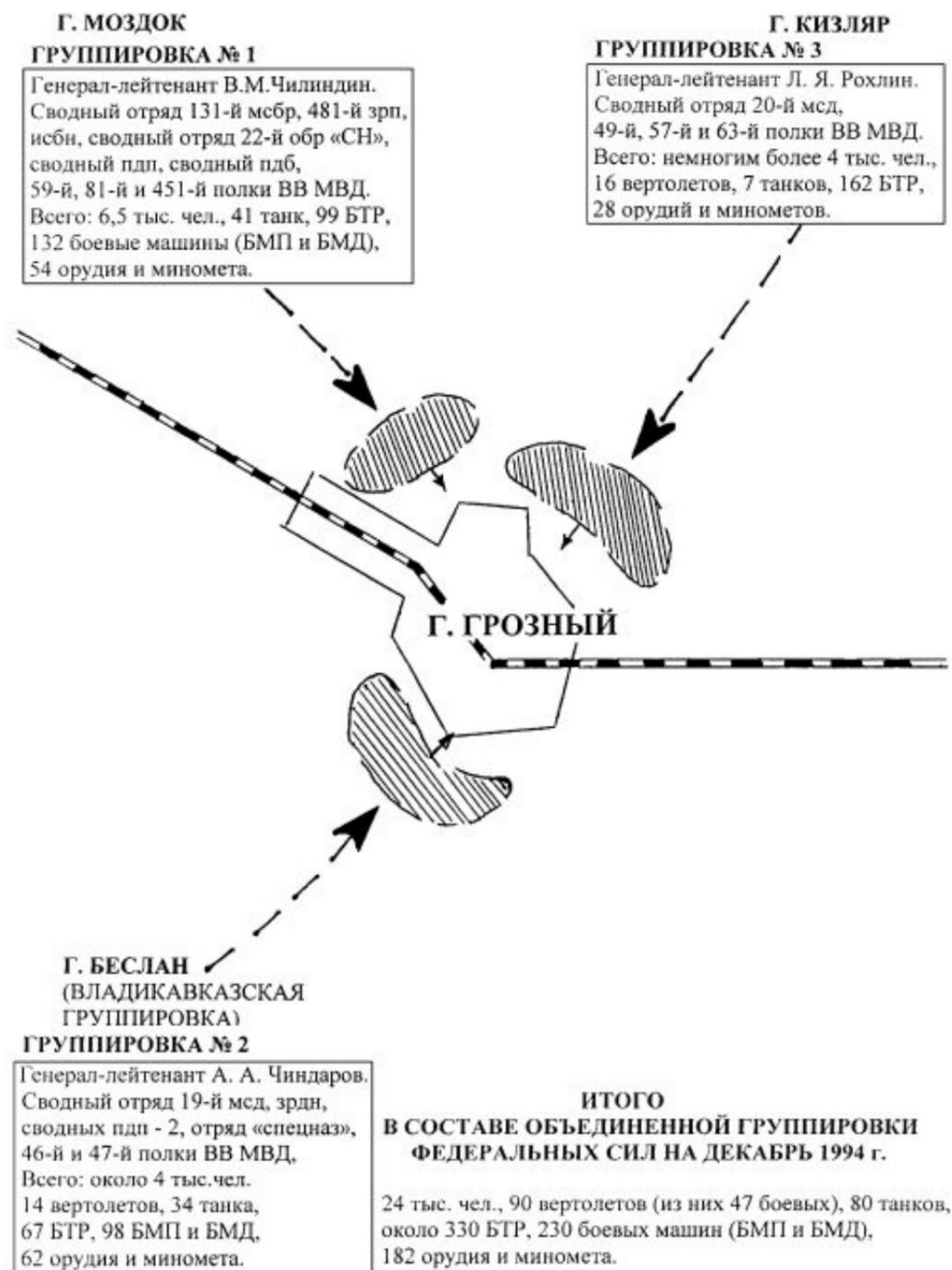
According to federal intelligence, the Chechen command created a fairly strong group of troops to defend Grozny. According to estimates, it included up to 10,000 militants, about 60 guns and mortars, 30 Grad MLRS launchers, 50 tanks, more than 100 infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers, about 150 anti-aircraft weapons and a large number of hand grenade launchers. In addition, detachments of militias acted on the side of the Chechens. And often "wild" detachments, which did not obey anyone and acted on their own. To accommodate these forces and means, three defensive

lines were created in Grozny: an internal one with a radius of 1 to 1.5 km around the "presidential palace"; medium at a distance of up to a kilometer from the inner boundary in the northwestern part of the city and up to 5 km in its southwestern and southeastern parts; external, passing mainly along the outskirts of the city and elongated towards Dolinsky.

On the internal frontier, the defense of the Chechen formations was based on resistance nodes created around the "presidential palace" using capital stone buildings. Their lower and upper floors were adapted for firing small arms and anti-tank weapons. Along the avenues of Ordzhonikidze, Pobeda and Pervomayskaya Street, positions were prepared for direct fire of artillery and tanks. The basis of the middle line of defense was made up of strongholds at the beginning of the Staropromyslovskoye Highway, nodes of resistance at bridges across the

Sunzha River, in the Minutka microdistrict, on Saykhanov Street, and oil fields, oil refineries, and a chemical plant prepared for undermining or arson.

The outer line of defense consisted of strongholds equipped on the highways Grozny - Mozdok, Dolinsky - Katayama - Tashkala, in the eastern microdistricts of Neftyanika, Khankala and Staraya Sunzha and in the south - Chernorechye.



The plan for capturing Grozny provided for four strikes in converging directions. They were supposed to allow the troops to reach the central part of the city within two days and

take over the "presidential palace". In this case, the main blow was to be delivered from the north.

Four groupings of troops were created for action in Grozny: "North" under the command of Major General K. Pulikovskiy; "North East" under the command of Lieutenant General L. Rokhlin; "West" under the command of Major General V. Petruk and "East" under the command of Major General N. Staskov. For their acquisition, it was necessary to attract additional forces. Starting from December 21, consolidated formations of the Leningrad, Volga, Ural and Siberian military districts have been hastily transferred to Chechnya. Thanks to this, the grouping of federal troops on the outskirts of Grozny increased to 38,000 people. They were armed with 230 tanks, 454 infantry fighting vehicles and 388 guns and mortars. The superiority over the enemy was 2.5-fold in personnel, five-fold in tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, more than six-fold in artillery, and absolute in aviation. An analysis of the decision to send troops to Grozny, adopted at a meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation on December 26, 1994, shows that it was also not

without flaws. One of the obvious miscalculations is the underestimation of the possible level of armed resistance on the part of the Chechens in the city. However, it was in Grozny that the main part of the Dudayev group was concentrated. In addition, at the time of the assault on Grozny, it was not completely blocked, and reinforcements and weapons from various regions of Chechnya were freely supplied to the militants. In other words, the Chechens defending Grozny had both complete freedom of maneuver and sources

replenishment.

The offensive of federal troops on Grozny began early in the morning on December 31, 1995, on the eve of the birthday of Minister of Defense PS Grachev. Was it a coincidence, a military cunning or a manifestation of the generals' sycophancy towards their boss - it is difficult to judge. A. S. Kulikov writes that he personally witnessed how one of the generals who received the task before January 3 promised Grachev to complete it on December 31. Grachev himself reacted with encouragement to the promises of this "Stakhanovist" on human blood. Emotions can be very

different. But against the backdrop of general confusion and sycophancy, lies and illiteracy, hypocrisis and

of irresponsibility, the facts of the actions of federal troops and Chechen fighters in Grozny at the beginning of the new year, 1995, remain indisputable. Let's dwell on them.

The sudden start of offensive actions of the Russian troops for the Dudayevites provided the opportunity for the 1st battalion of the 81st motorized rifle regiment to reach the railway station in the northern direction. By 13:00 he was already busy. At 15:00, the 2nd battalion of this regiment and the combined detachment of the 20th motorized rifle division blocked the "presidential palace". The 131st brigade, advancing along Mayakovsky Street and not meeting organized resistance, also managed to reach the railway station area.



"Stalingrad" 1995

The fact that the actions of the Russian troops on December 31 in Grozny were sudden for Dudayev was later confirmed even by his field commanders. Intermediate defensive lines were not occupied by them, by their own admission, at the time the federal troops entered the city. True, not all areas of

the troops were successful. The eastern group of troops did not fulfill the assigned task,

headed by the Deputy Commander of the Airborne Forces, Major General N. Staskov. One of her regiments, advancing along the railroad, entered the city. But then, deepening three or four blocks, he was stopped by blockages and enemy fire from small arms and grenade launchers.

By the decision of General Staskov, the direction of the regiment's advance was changed. But this did not give positive results either. In the second microdistrict, he ran into a prepared stronghold of the Dudayevites and was blocked. During the night from December 31 to January 1, the regiment, repulsing the attacks of militants, suffered heavy losses. Then, at the command of General Kvashnin, he withdrew to the previously occupied area.

In the western direction, the group of troops of Major General V. Petruk also failed to complete the task. Particularly serious mistakes were made by the commander of the 19th motorized rifle division, Colonel G. Kandalin. Much more slowly than the situation required, one of the regiments of this division advanced to reinforce the western grouping under the leadership of Lieutenant General S. Todorov, deputy commander of the North Caucasus Military District for combat training. Perhaps the most tragic page for the federal troops in the battle for

Grozny was the defeat on December 31, 1994 - January 1, 1995 of the 131st separate Maikop motorized rifle brigade and the 81st motorized rifle regiment.

At 7 o'clock in the morning the brigade began to advance and four hours later entered the city from the north. At 13 o'clock, her first battalion reached the railway station, where the second battalion was soon brought up. The troops moved in marching columns, there was no reconnaissance of the enemy, and practically no necessary precautions were taken. And no wonder - the militants have no resistance

did not provide.

The relatively easy success did not alert the brigade commander. Moreover, he allowed the personnel, leaving military equipment, to go to warm themselves in the station building and other buildings. The equipment itself on the forecourt was in marching order, the duty forces and means were not assigned. Repeated violation

of the laws of military art led to the most deplorable results. Subdivisions of Maikop

motorized rifle brigade were suddenly attacked by militants simultaneously from different directions. Military equipment, accumulated on the forecourt, was fired point-blank from grenade launchers. Manpower was destroyed by machine-gun and automatic fire. Selectively, snipers worked on the most important targets. Almost simultaneously, many combat vehicles burst into flames, dozens of people fell to the ground lifeless.

The surviving personnel took refuge in the station building and returned fire indiscriminately, consuming the portable ammunition supply. It was almost impossible to break through the dense fire of the militants to the boxes with cartridges that were in the combat vehicles. The few surviving officers tried to somehow organize the defense, ensure the delivery of ammunition. They did this with great difficulty. Unfired soldiers, finding themselves under deadly enemy fire, did not obey the commands of their commanders. The instinct of self-preservation often dominated the sense of duty. The time will come to account for the massacre in the area of the

Grozny railway station and the death of innocent boys, and the authorities will begin to look for positive aspects in the fact of the senseless death of the Maykop motorized rifle brigade. One of the journalists, on request, will compose a story about how Private Ivanov steadfastly repelled enemy attacks for several hours. Someone will even try to raise the authority of the brigade commander, claiming that he led the battle, being wounded in both legs. This is a common trick to smooth over the true assessment of what happened and pass off criminal negligence as heroism. On the morning of the first day of the new, 1995, the commander of the

dying Maykop brigade on the radio asked his superior commander to support the remnants of his unit, which was dying in the area of the railway station, with attacks from combat helicopters. But for some reason, this request was denied to him - apparently, there were no free helicopters at hand or they did not bring fuel for them. Instead of "turntables", the 81st regiment of the 19th motorized rifle division under the command of Colonel Andreevsky was sent to help the encircled.



Between fights

A characteristic feature of a Russian person is to stubbornly step on the same rake and get hit on the forehead. The 81st motorized rifle regiment, without preliminary reconnaissance and without escort by combat helicopters (other means of fire support in the conditions of the city are ineffective) rushed to the aid of the Maykop brigade. But, having barely been drawn into the city, at 11 o'clock on January 1, it was blocked and also shot at point-blank range by Dudayev's men.



Feast in Time of Plague

Equally unsuccessful was the attempt to release the encircled troops by the forces of the battalion of the 137th Airborne Regiment. Immediately before the exit, his commander was given a plan of the city in one copy, according to which, by the light of a portable lamp, the task was set for companies and platoons.

Then the advance began in the conditions of a foggy night. The car in front was not visible at a distance of 20 m.

there were no roadblocks, no curfews, no guides. Therefore, the column immediately "lost", and then was torn into two parts. One of its units in the area of the Press House was ambushed and lost 4 combat vehicles, 14 people were killed and 7 were wounded. The hope for the deblockade of the surrounded Maykop brigade by a blow from the outside gradually faded away. Senior

commanders signed with soldiers' blood in their impotence. Those surrounded in the station area had to rely on God and their own strength, which was becoming

Less and less.

True, there was another chance. In the midst of the battle near the railway station, the Dudayevites went to the army wave and gave the floor to the "human rights activist" and State Duma deputy Sergey Kovalev, who was among them. - I am an intermediary. What will be your suggestions? -

the deputy asked.

"We would like to get out of the city without a fight," the Maykopians answered him. After a meeting

with the militants, S. Kovalev again got in touch: - I had a talk with the Chechen side, the conditions are as follows. You leave with your service weapon. You leave the equipment for its subsequent transfer to the Russian side. You are taken by civilian transport to your own.



Grozny, January 1995

None of the surrounded Russians believed Kovalev. By that time, they had already seen enough of how the Chechens shot the wounded. The survivors went on a breakthrough. Units came out...

Later, after the liberation of the station by the federal troops, the body of brigade commander Maykopskaya was found, shot at point-blank range. Near the corpse of a physician. And around - the corpses of dozens of soldiers and officers, on the square - dozens of burnt military equipment. On this terrible day, January 1, 1995, only the 131st separate motorized rifle brigade lost 25 officers and ensigns, 60 soldiers and sergeants killed, and another 72 servicemen were missing. If we add to this the loss of units trying to release the surrounded comrades, then the score will go to hundreds.

Events developed somewhat differently in the grouping of troops "North-East". When advancing to the city center, surveillance and reconnaissance were organized along the entire route. There are taken allowed checkpoints at every busy line. The measures the units of the "North-East" grouping of troops to avoid a sudden attack by illegal armed groups and to gain a foothold in the area of the hospital complex, in the city center. The grouping of troops "West" when

advancing to the city center met with strong resistance from the militants. Part of the forces of this group was blocked by illegal armed formations, and under their fire, the federal troops were forced to leave the city. Being unable to overcome the resistance of the enemy, units and subunits of the group of troops "West" entrenched themselves on the western outskirts of the city. In the eastern direction, the federal troops were stopped by blockages, intense fire from militants from small arms and grenade launchers. Having suffered losses in manpower and equipment, at the command of the leadership they also stopped the offensive and were withdrawn to the previously occupied areas.

Thus, in the first days of hostilities, the federal troops suffered significant losses in manpower and equipment and were unable to block the Dudayevites in the city center, as was envisaged by the plan of the operation. Only units of the "North-East" grouping of forces were able to enter Grozny and hold their positions in the center of the city, despite the fact that the militants concentrated their best forces against them.

Initial failures in the battles for Grozny were due to a number of reasons. One of them is that the units and subunits were not assigned a specific combat mission, their commanders were completely unaware of the intention of the senior commander, often did not have even the most superficial information about the enemy and the possible nature of his actions. This was aggravated by the notion that the Dudayev detachments, which existed among the commanding staff of the federal forces on the eve of the assault, were like a bandit rabble incapable of resisting regular troops in an organized manner. Consequence of everything

This was a superficial assessment of the situation and actions that did not specifically meet the prevailing conditions. Another

reason was that the commanders of units and subunits during the hostilities in the city did not pay enough attention to organizing and maintaining interaction between motorized rifle, tank units and artillery, as well as with units operating at checkpoints and neighboring directions. The personnel of the attacking units were often not informed about which object (building) had already been captured by the federals, and which had not. As a result, there were cases of firing at their own troops. Military equipment was used inefficiently and in the conditions of the city acted without proper cover from motorized riflemen. The advance of units and subunits was carried out in columns, a large accumulation of combat vehicles was allowed on the narrow streets of the city in conditions of limited maneuver.



And somewhere there, at home ...

The control of subunits during the battle was carried out over radio networks, most often in clear text and on one radio frequency for

all participating forces and means. This greatly clogged the air and led to the fact that radio communications, due to the reigning ethereal chaos, were paralyzed at crucial moments in the battle. Moreover, radio communications without the use of covert command and control documents allowed the enemy to misinform the federal troops, determine the location of command posts and disable them. There was also such a reason as the indecision of the command staff of the western and eastern groupings of troops. This allowed the illegal armed formations to mass their efforts against units and subunits that had reached the central part of the city. Among the miscalculations

in the work of commanders should also be attributed insufficient attention, and sometimes neglect, to reconnaissance of the opposing enemy, passivity in collecting the necessary information. The initial stage of hostilities was adversely affected by issues

unresolved protection military personnel from "psychological pressure" from the opposing side, neutralization of the impact of the media and work with the local population. All these factors to some extent reduced the moral and psychological readiness of the personnel of the federal troops. A significant part of the personnel expressed doubts about the ability of their units and themselves to carry out the assigned combat missions. Military failures, as usual, led to the search for those responsible. Changes were made in the top leadership of the troops. Major General I. Babichev was appointed commander of the "West" grouping of troops, instead of the dismissed Major General V. Petruk and Lieutenant General S. Todorov, and

Colonel V. Prizemzlin became the commander of the 19th motorized rifle division. In the northern direction, in order to create a unified leadership, the two groupings of troops were merged into one - "North" under the general command of Lieutenant General Lev Rokhlin.

The second assault on Grozny

Only after the unsuccessful completion of the first assault on Grozny, the military leaders remembered the existence of some common truths of military art, which they were taught in military academies. According to new estimates, as an excuse for the military failure that had occurred, it was stated that the Russian command, based on the composition of the Dudayev group in the city and its operational equipment, needed to have a federal group of at least 50-60 thousand people to storm Grozny. This was supposed to provide a fourfold superiority over the enemy and make it possible to conduct an offensive in the conditions of the city. (By the way, military science for conducting an offensive in such conditions requires six to eight times superiority.) As of January 3, 1995, the Russian command had no more than 5 thousand people in the city, and several dozen more people were helplessly trampling on the outskirts of Grozny .

The lack of proper planning and high-quality preparation of the operation was again manifested, which became the main reason for subsequent military failures and unjustified casualties.

The military command demanded a significant and rapid build-up of troop groupings. But not only operational, but also military reserves were not. The 165th Marine Regiment of the Pacific Fleet and a combined marine battalion of the Northern and Baltic Fleets were urgently sent to Grozny. It is quite clear that they were not going to land amphibious assault forces in Grozny. There were simply not enough soldiers in the Ground Forces. Yes, and in parts of the marine corps with people was not dense. To recruit units of marines, it was necessary to thoroughly "clean up" the crews of warships. A special-purpose brigade arrived in Chechnya to fight small groups of

militants and carry out special tasks. Finally, the operational and military headquarters began to pay more serious attention to the organization and conduct of reconnaissance. A number of counterintelligence operations were carried out and a dense spy network was revealed in the rear of the federal troops.

With the arrival of fresh forces in the grouping, as well as as a result of the regrouping, the federal troops subsequently continued military operations in Grozny, aiming them at capturing the buildings of the republican authorities and expanding their zone of control. On January 5, the

129th motorized rifle regiment, having carried out a roundabout maneuver, reached the northern outskirts of Grozny, and then drove out detachments of militants from a military camp on the eastern bank of the Sunzha River. The next day, this regiment with one battalion, having broken the fierce resistance of the Dudaevites, occupied military camp No. 86, located in the city center. Three bridges over the Sunzha were taken under the control of Russian troops. This provided the conditions for more active operations in the eastern part of the Chechen capital.

At a time when ordinary Russian guys were dying on the streets of Grozny, politicians in Moscow were playing their own complicated game, alternately playing along with one side or the other. In the midst of fierce fighting, the Russian Government, on behalf of the President, offered the Chechen fighters to cease fire, leave their positions, surrender their weapons and military equipment, and return the prisoners in the period from January 8 to 10. While the Chechens were "thinking" whether to accept this ultimatum, the command of the federal forces received an order to cease fire and offensive

operations for the same period. The order from Moscow on a temporary cessation of hostilities aroused bewilderment among the soldiers and officers, who regarded it as nothing more than another betrayal of the capital's officials. But the military, as usual, did not dare to disobey the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. As a result, the militants received another gift in the form of a respite and in a few days were able to regroup their forces and strengthen their defenses. Then there will be several more such "truces", and each of these respites cost the lives of hundreds of Russian soldiers, but none of them gave the desired political result.



In the "non-peaceful" Chechen village

After the first "truce" the fighting broke out with renewed vigor. The Chechens desperately resisted, the federals stubbornly stormed one stronghold after another. On January 13, the marine battalion received the task of storming the complex of buildings of the Council of Ministers of the Chechen Republic. It was a "horseshoe" formed by many buildings with a courtyard in the middle. The open side of the complex overlooked the Presidential Palace. The northern part of the complex was held by militants, while paratroopers were in the southern part. In the buildings of the quarters adjacent to the complex from the west and east, there were also militants. By the time the Marine Corps approached, the parachute battalion had already twice unsuccessfully tried to capture the quarter and suffered heavy losses.



Meeting of fighting friends

The Marines were given only 40 minutes to prepare for battle. Ammunition and food for three days were issued in the initial area, all commanders received maps. However, these maps were made in 1975 and reflect very little of the actual the state of the area.

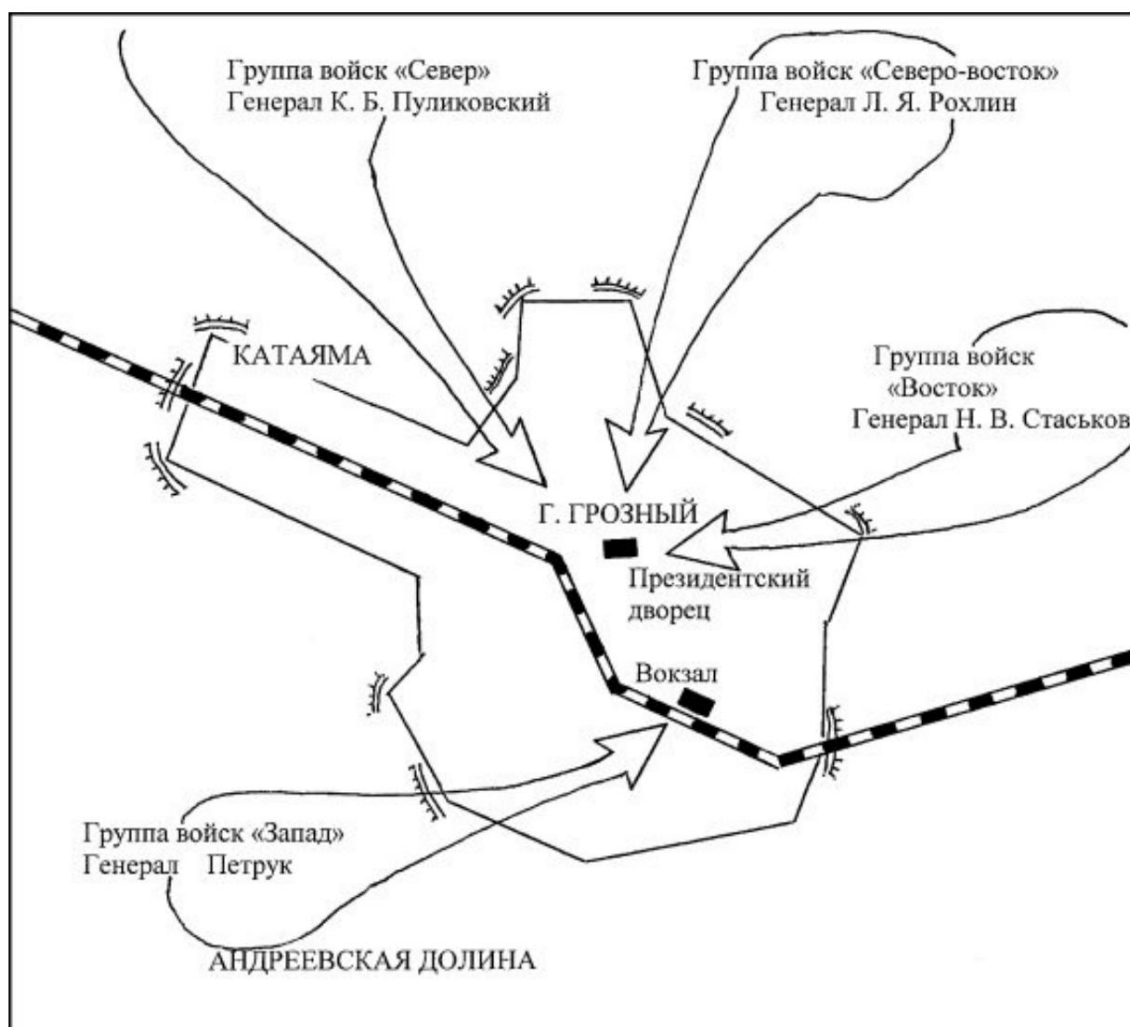
It was only after dark that the Marines were able to approach the Council of Ministers building. A difficult picture of the past battle appeared before their eyes: all the buildings of the complex were damaged by shells, the paratroopers carried out their dead and wounded, only 10-15 fighters remained in the ranks in the airborne companies. Nobody was waiting for the Marines. The paratroopers could not really say anything about the location of their commander. Later it turned out that by that time only the commander of the airborne battalion was still alive, and all other control officers were killed or wounded.

With difficulty, we managed to contact the commander of the airborne battalion by radio and clarify the situation. Only then did the Marines begin their advance inside the building in complete darkness. Attempts to turn on electric lights immediately caused fire from Chechen snipers. Despite all these difficulties, one of the companies managed to get up several floors and began to descend another set of stairs. But at this time, the building started a fire. At the same time, the militants attacked the Marines, operating from the basement and another wing of the building. A fierce battle began, and it was difficult to understand which side the victory was leaning on.

Only with the approach of fresh forces on January 19, units of the 20th Guards Volgograd Division from the corps of L. Rokhlin captured the building of the Supreme Council of the Chechen Republic and the Presidential Palace, hoisting the State Flag of the Russian Federation over it. This "victory" was happily reported by all Russian mass media. Probably, many in the Kremlin perceived this in exactly the same way as the hoisting of the Red Banner over the Reichstag in May 1945. But it was too early to celebrate the victory, and it was still far from the complete

defeat of the militants in Grozny. Chechens fought skillfully in the city, using special tactics, military cunning and relying on the conservatism of the Russian command. Having knocked out troops from some

at home, they left five or six people there, and the rest were taken to rear. After some time, this house was stormed by federal troops after a solid artillery preparation. Having captured the building, the attackers found several corpses there and themselves went over to the defense of the object with forces up to a company. The Chechens again used this accumulation of troops in their own interests. Pulling up the previously withdrawn detachment to the building, they rushed to the assault after firing at the windows with "land mines". These "land mines", invented by the commander of the Abkhaz battalion, consisted of two 400-gram TNT blocks attached to the head of an RPG-7D grenade. The jet engine of the grenade easily and quite accurately sent a deadly charge to several hundred meters, where then an explosion of enormous force occurred, from which people gathered in the house died. The survivors were finished off by Chechens who broke into the building.



Land mines were also effectively used to destroy armored vehicles. When they hit, a huge hole formed in the armor and detonation of the ammunition inside the combat vehicle occurred. Undermining the combat vehicle and the death of its crew were inevitable. There were other methods of non-standard warfare, which were quickly mastered by the enemy, but were studied extremely slowly by the Russian command. As a result, people died, military equipment was destroyed, and the bloody bookkeeping of the war was replenished.

From mid-January, the command of the United Group began planning the final stage of the operation in Grozny. Finally, the blockade of the city was carried out from the previously open southern and southeastern directions, from where the "feeding" of illegal armed formations with personnel, weapons and ammunition continued.



As in besieged Leningrad

Based on the nature of the upcoming hostilities, the eastern grouping was renamed the Southeast grouping of troops. It was headed by the Deputy Commander of the Volga Military District, Lieutenant-General V. I. Popov. The plan of the operation envisaged part of the forces of this grouping, after a maneuver from the northern direction, to block the most important transport communications, capture the dominant heights and complete the complete blockade of Grozny from the south. In the future, it was planned, using

the success of the units on the eastern bank of the Sunzha River, to defeat all the remaining militant detachments in Grozny and establish full control of the federal forces over this city by different-time actions of the assault detachments of the North, West and South East groups of troops in converging directions. .

The final stage of the operation to crush illegal armed formations in Grozny began on the morning of February 3. Two regiments of the grouping of troops "South-East" carried out

maneuver from the Khankala region to the south and southeast of the Chechen capital. The 324th motorized rifle regiment saddled the Prigoroye-Gikalovsky road, which ensured the advancement of the 245th motorized rifle regiment and part of the rear with ammunition. Then the 245th motorized rifle regiment blocked the road south of Gikalovsky and blocked the directions of Shali - Grozny and Khasavyurt - Grozny. At the same time, the troops of the "North" and "West" groupings began to liquidate the militants in the buildings adjacent to the Minutka Square with attacks of assault detachments at different times in converging directions. At the same time, Major General I. Babichev's units captured bridgeheads on the eastern bank of the Sunzha River and fought out to Saykhanov Street.



We will fight again, soldier!

During February 5–7, fighting in the Chechen capital continued. The actions of the assault detachments of the 106th Airborne Division from the area of Pavel Musorov Square captured the hospital, several high-rise buildings and blocked the area of \u200b\u200bMinutka Square from the west. The grouping of troops "North", advancing in the direction of Lenin Avenue, occupied a complex of buildings on the Struggle Square. Then its assault detachments from the area of the tram park carried out a detour and occupied high-rise buildings on Gudermesskaya Street. As a result of all these actions, the blocking of the Minutka area from the northeast and east was completed.

In the next four days, the troops of the "South-East" group, reinforced by the 166th motorized rifle brigade, saddled the Flkhan Yurt - Chechen-Aul road and prevented the militants from retreating to New Fisheries. And on the night of February 21, the federal troops occupied the dominant heights in the Novye Promyslov area. As a result of these actions, Grozny was finally blocked from all directions, and the remnants of Dudayev's detachments were completely surrounded in the areas of Novye Promyslov, Alda and Chernorechye.



On Grozny street

Thus, by the end of February 1995, federal troops had captured most of Grozny, with the exception of the Chernorechye region, as well as some settlements to the south and east of the Chechen capital. At the same time, operations were carried out to push out militant detachments in a southwestern direction and to establish firm control over the railway and highways that ran along the northern bank of the Terek River from the villages of Savelovskaya and Shchelkovskaya. The operational isolation of Grozny quickly yielded results. On March 6, without

resistance from the militants, units of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs liquidated the last bridgehead of the Dudayevites in Grozny in the Chernorechye region. The operation to capture the city, which lasted more than two months, ended successfully. After that, the federal command set about creating several lines of defense around the Chechen capital, capable of defending it in the event of an enemy counteroffensive. True, these measures proved to be ineffective when separate small groups of armed Chechens penetrated the city, who continued to attack objects and units of the federal troops at night.

Thus, in practice, the statement of the Russian Minister of Defense about his ability to capture Grozny with one airborne regiment in a day was "implemented". The operation took two months, and the regiment turned into a whole army. Instead of a special operation, the federal troops in Grozny conducted systematic military operations using the entire arsenal of available forces and means. The once beautiful city was reduced to ruins. Crazed with fear, miraculously surviving residents of Grozny and its environs did not see Russian servicemen as their liberators: Russian shells destroyed their houses, bullets fired by the federals found the most unexpected targets. No one counted the losses during the fierce battles, and for how many Russians and Chechens Grozny became a common grave, it is difficult to say.

Game on two fronts

Already during the second assault on Grozny, the front of hostilities began to expand to other regions of Chechnya. At the same time, it often seemed that the federal authorities themselves were interested in this, in whose ranks there were individual people who pursued their economic and political interests by all means.

So, in January 1995, the residents of Shatoi, wanting to avoid the fate of Grozny, declared their city a neutral zone, expelled militants from there and asked the Russian command not to expose this regional center to artillery shelling and air strikes. An agreement to this effect was signed between the elders and the federal command. But already on the second day after the signing of this document, two helicopters attacked the school and the hospital, then the planes hit the city market. As a result, 120 dead and several hundred wounded. After that, the once furious civilians of Shatoi take up arms and replenish Dudayev's army.

Someone in the federal center needs a big war, on which everything can be attributed: both miscalculations in the economy and big money. Even before the start of the war, Menatep Bank approached the Russian government with a proposal to give it the status of an authorized bank for the restoration of the economy and the national economy of the Chechen Republic after establishing constitutional order there. And immediately a lot of money flew into this "black hole", most of which did not leave the Moscow Garden Ring. But in order to "write off" these amounts, war and new destruction were needed.



Congratulations - Hero!

For the sake of this, on March 6, 1996, the militants "launched" into Grozny. Soon they freely leave this city, taking away hastily stolen property in stolen cars. But the federal command seems to be unaware of the situation in Grozny, and its artillery and aviation until March 15 are destroying previously "restored" buildings and enterprises. The money allocated for the restoration of the Chechen capital and partially settled in Moscow was safely written off, and officials got the right to ask for new ones. In 1996 alone, such a "restoration" of Chechnya was spent on a loan of a billion dollars and 36 billion Russian rubles. This money was used to arm new detachments of militants on the territory of Chechnya and solve many personal problems in Moscow, but for some reason they were not enough to treat the wounded and bury the dead. Truly, to whom is war, and to whom is mother dear.



In memory of the deceased husband

After the fall of Grozny, the efforts of the federal troops were concentrated in the area of the Argun settlement. According to the Russian command, this city, located on the eastern bank of the river of the same name and being a major railway junction, was defended by a group of up to two thousand people, who had ten tanks, the same number of artillery pieces and about twenty mortars. The blockade of Argun from the west, north and south was established at the end of February 1995. But for some reason, the operation to storm the city was constantly postponed. As a result, the rebels were able to bring additional forces to the city and strengthen the eastern bank of the Argun River and the city outskirts with various engineering structures. From a simple settlement, Argun turned into a real fortress, the storming of which could not do without numerous human casualties. The operation to capture Argun began on the night of March 22. Approached federal troops unexpectedly for the Chechens

crossed the river in two sections. After that, units of the 506th motorized rifle regiment engulfed the city from the south and west. From the north, the combined regiment of the 106th airborne division took control of the Rostov-Baku highway. All the dominant heights around the city were occupied by the Marines of the Pacific Fleet.

On the second day of the operation, the battalion of the motorized rifle regiment of the Ural Military District, bypassing Argun from the east, closed the encirclement. At the same time, the forces of two brigades of internal troops created an internal encirclement front and began fighting to eliminate the rebels who were in the city.

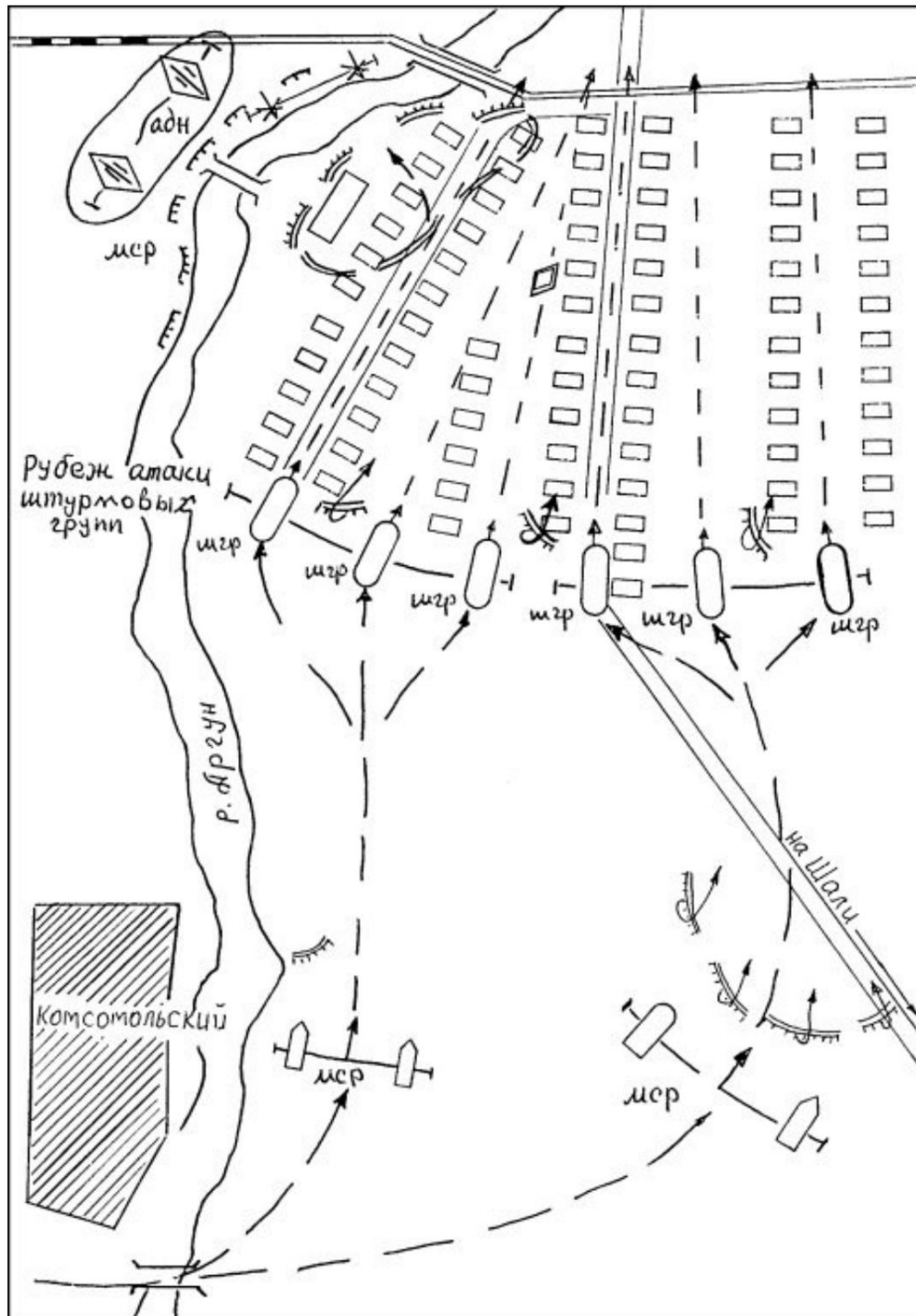
On the third day, the Dudaevites made an attempt to release the Argun by strikes from the detachments from Gudermes and Shali. But both attacks were repulsed on the distant approaches to the city by air strikes and artillery

fire. Finally, it was announced that on March 23 Argun had been taken by federal troops "three days earlier than planned." There was no talk of any storming of the city, it turned out that the militants surrendered it practically without resistance. The Russian command itself announced that during the capture of Argun, the federal troops lost three people killed and nine people wounded. After that, it was just right to write a new work on the art of war during the assault on cities well fortified and saturated with enemy troops.

After the capture of Argun, the federal command concentrated its main forces on the approaches to Gudermes.

The basis of the Gudermes resistance center was defensive positions in the northern and western suburbs of the city and in the Dzhalka region, as well as buildings prepared for defense within the city itself. The advanced positions of the militants were equipped along the western bank of the Sunzha River, in the regions of Braguny and Darbankha. Strongholds were most carefully prepared in the areas of the bridge across the Chernaya River (2 km southwest of Dzhalka), the Gairan-Kort Mountains (3 km south of Gudermes), the reservoir on the northwestern outskirts of the city and the railway station. In total, the Gudermes group of militants, according to federal intelligence, concentrated up to 2,300 personnel, who, in addition to small arms, were armed with three tanks, four infantry fighting vehicles, four guns and mortars, three jet

multiple launch rocket systems BM-21 and up to six anti-aircraft machine gun mounts. It was possible to defend the city with such forces and means long enough.



Operations to capture this large stronghold were planned and carried out according to a previously worked out scheme. Her

The plan provided for three stages in the actions of the federal forces: at the first stage, the creation of shock groups and their occupation of the initial areas; on the second - the advancement of troops and the blockade of the city; on the third - the disarmament of militant groups in the city itself by the forces of internal troops. The offensive of the troops was to begin with a powerful artillery preparation lasting up to 30 minutes, and the subsequent offensive was accompanied by artillery fire and air strikes to its entire depth.

The federal command was clearly in a hurry. As a result of this haste, there was extremely little time for the troops to occupy their initial positions and prepare them for combat operations. After the completion of the operation in Argun on March 24, by March 26–27, the groupings of troops were to occupy new starting areas for an offensive on Gudermes and Shali. The active

operations of the troops to blockade the cities of Gudermes and Shali began on the morning of March 28, after artillery preparation. The strongest resistance was met by federal troops on the southern approaches to Gudermes and on the western and eastern outskirts of Shali. Unexpected for the enemy was

the exit of federal troops to the southern approaches to Gudermes. The militants expected an attack on the city from the side of Argun, previously taken by the troops, through the passage in the Tersky Range - the "Gudermes Gate". Other approaches to the city were considered inaccessible to the troops, so the main forces of the militants were concentrated precisely from the side of the Gudermes Gate.



Russian Minister of Defense I. Sergeev visits the hospital for the wounded in Chechnya

But their expectations were not met. The consolidated regiment of the 76th airborne division, using the area defended by units of the 131st separate motorized rifle brigade northeast of Oktyabrsky, overcame the swampy terrain and immediately captured the dominant heights on the Tersky Range south of Gudermes. The capture and retention of heights by paratroopers was ensured by pre-planned artillery fire. It was possible to overcome the swampy and rugged terrain thanks to the combined construction of the column: wheeled vehicles were placed between tracked vehicles and attached to them by tugboats. Tanks and combat vehicles, crossing the swamp, pulled wheeled vehicles behind them, which without this could get bogged down in the mud. Already by March 29, Gudermes was blocked by federal troops: from the east and southeast, the combined regiment of the 76th airborne

divisions, from the south by the battalion of the 276th motorized rifle regiment, and even earlier by the 129th motorized rifle regiment and the 74th separate motorized rifle brigade from the west and northwest. The militants were also blocked in the Dzhalka area. During March 30, units of the "North" grouping, entrenched on the achieved lines, ensured the actions of the internal troops to clean up Gudermes. By the end of the day, the city was liberated from the militants.

The successful capture of the city was largely ensured by the high-quality organization of reconnaissance, which was constantly conducted over the area of combat operations from the air and from the dominating heights. The information received about the enemy allowed the artillery to timely destroy or suppress the firing points of the militants both on the outskirts and directly within the city.

Events in the Shali region developed less successfully. Part of the units of the 506th motorized rifle regiment on the morning of March 28, using the results of artillery preparation, were able to quickly reach the northeastern outskirts of the city. However, the units that advanced to block Shali from the east were stopped by a sudden fire from militants from prepared positions. The main reasons for the disruption in the performance of tasks by the units of the 506th motorized rifle regiment were the low organization of reconnaissance during the advance, the carelessness allowed in matters of masking the elements of battle order and command posts, as well as the inability of the commanders to call and control the fire of regular, attached and supporting artillery in a timely manner. In addition, during the advancement of the regiment's units to the blocking lines, there was a neglect of mutual identification signals. As a result, one of the battalions was hit by a flight of combat helicopters and suffered losses in personnel. Only in the morning of the next day, after a 12-minute fire raid, the units, with the support

of aviation, captured the positions of the militants and blocked the city from the east. By that time, it had already been possible to block it from the west and south-west. However, the approaches to the city from the southeast remained open. This allowed the militants to withdraw part of their forces through Serzhen-Yurt to the Vedenov region. Shali was completely blocked only by the end of

March 31. In the following days, internal troops carried out a detailed sweep

locality. Thus, despite a

number of miscalculations, by the end of March, the federal troops managed to simultaneously capture two large settlements with virtually no destruction of residential buildings and with minimal losses. In general, the result of a series of successive operations was the defeat of illegal armed formations in large cities of the flat part of Chechnya,

a significant part of the territory of the republic was under the control, albeit formal, of federal forces. Subsequently, after the defeat of large groups of militants, the main way to carry out tasks was the actions of troops in the areas of responsibility by maneuver groups or raid detachments from base centers. In this case, the blocking of settlements was carried out simultaneously from different directions. Federal troops, after passing some important milestone (crossroads, bridge, dominant height), trying to gain a foothold in this place, set up a roadblock. As they moved deeper into the territory of Chechnya, it was gradually covered with a dense network of checkpoints, which became a kind of centers of order on the territory of the rebellious republic. When creating the next checkpoint, the federal command proceeded solely from the consideration of how important this piece of terrain is

tactically or operationally. At the same time, such an important factor as the ability to ensure the survivability of a given checkpoint in the event of an attack by militants was often not taken into account. There was often no reliable combat communication between checkpoints. As a result, the garrisons of checkpoints often turned into easy prey for the militants, who acted swiftly, brazenly and with great knowledge.

terrain.



Troshev Gennady Nikolaevich, Commander of the Joint Group of Federal Forces in Chechnya, Commander of the Army (1995–1998), Commander of the Joint Group of Federal Forces in the Chechen Republic (2000–2001), Colonel General

According to the memoirs of Captain V.V. Arkhipov, in June 1995 one of the checkpoints equipped near the settlement of Kharachay was suddenly attacked by an enemy detachment of up to forty people. This checkpoint was located at a distance of up to 12 kilometers from the main forces of the regiment, and the approaches to it were washed by several mountain rivers. It was possible to move to the checkpoint only in a convoy, strictly one by one. Movement could be carried out at a speed of no more than 30 kilometers

per hour. The militants knew these conditions well. When the column of the mobile group approached the gorge, it was suddenly fired upon from an ambush set up by the second group of militants. From grenade launchers were hit

the first and last cars, after which the rest began to be shot. The unit was destroyed almost completely. The same fate befell the second unit, sent to help the checkpoint. Thus, the attack on a checkpoint near the settlement

of Kharachoy in June 1995, in fact, became a trap for the federal forces. The militants skillfully used the terrain and stereotypes in the actions of the Russian command. The forces sent to help the checkpoint soon fell into ambush skillfully set up for them and suffered heavy losses. The garrison of the checkpoint was forced to fight in the environment, and the effectiveness of this battle was very low. Later, taught by bitter experience, the federal command began to pay more serious attention to the

issues of interaction between the troops assigned to serve at checkpoints and the maneuver forces in reserve. Checkpoints were set up only in those places where, if necessary, reserves could quickly arrive. In addition, it was planned to cover checkpoints with attacks from combat helicopters and artillery fire from closed firing positions. Each checkpoint was equipped as a well-prepared stronghold in terms of engineering. In April 1995, the efforts of the federal command in Chechnya were aimed at ousting the rebels from the settlements in the eastern, southern and

western directions. At the same time, the Chechens more and more frankly began to switch to the tactics of guerrilla warfare, widely using sabotage, raids and ambushes. So, on April 1, 1995, a reconnaissance group of a regiment of internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, following on three armored personnel

carriers, fell into one of the ambushes arranged on the road south of the settlement of Takhchur. The militants waited for the moment when the entire column was in the zone of their fire, and opened fire at the same time on the first and last vehicles. After these vehicles were damaged, the rest finally lost the ability to maneuver on the ground and were left by the crews with little or no fight. The battle itself lasted three hours. Government troops lost two officers and nine soldiers killed. The losses of the rebels were announced at 25 people, but actually killed and wounded Chechens

nobody has seen. Traffic on this route was suspended for several days. It was necessary to attract additional forces in order to reconnoiter the enemy and the terrain, clear the rubble, eliminate minefields and evacuate the wrecked equipment.



We have a short conversation with the terrorists...

In the western direction, hostilities in April were conducted mainly for settlements. On April 8, federal troops occupied Shaam-Yurt, Novy Sharoi and Samashki. In the latter, during a fierce battle, according to official figures, 130 militants were killed and 124 were captured. The loss of government troops amounted to 13 people. At the same time, federal troops operating as part of battle groups in separate, sometimes separated from each other directions, often remained without tactical communication with each other, as a result of which they were forced to slow down the pace of advance into the depths of the settlement. The militants skillfully used these pauses for their own purposes. Their detachments retreated to new positions or left the settlement without suffering significant losses.

Continuing the offensive, by the end of April 10, federal troops drove the rebels out of the settlements of Achkhoy-Martan and Zakan Yurt. By that time, some auls located south of Grozny were also occupied. Gradually, the line of contact between the parties approached the border of the mountain-forest area, where natural conditions were favorable for the militants to conduct a guerrilla war. There, places of resistance were prepared in advance, caches with weapons, shelters were equipped, caves were dug. Suspension bridges were laid across some gorges and mountain rivers, on the slopes of the mountains there were numerous places for them to be occupied by arrows, and on the paths there were places for setting up minefields. But before starting hostilities in the mountains, the federal command decided to capture all the main settlements, among which Bamut occupied an important place. By mid-April, special forces of the federal

troops occupied the dominant heights on the outskirts of Bamut, and the next day the assault on this settlement began. It ended in failure. The subsequent attempts to capture Bamut with the support of artillery and aviation ended in the same way. The Dudayevites took refuge for a period of fire training in solid village basements and missile silos, and with the approach of infantry, tanks and armored personnel carriers, they destroyed them with aimed fire from well-prepared positions. The Federals suffered heavy losses and stomped helplessly on the outskirts of Bamut. It seemed that the whole experience of mastering Argun, Gudermes and Shali crashed against the walls of Bamut.

As the private tactical tasks were solved, it became clear that the war was acquiring a protracted and clearly partisan character on the part of the Chechens. This, to a certain extent, could still be prevented by the active competent actions of the federal troops. The offensive of the ground forces from the front, combined with artillery fire and air strikes to the entire depth of the areas controlled by the Dudaevites, were supposed to hinder maneuver and disperse the forces of the highlanders in numerous directions, making them very vulnerable. There were certain conditions for conducting deep offensive operations. But it was at this time that a

political factor came into play - preparations for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in

Great Patriotic War. An influx of foreign delegations, guests, and journalists was expected in Moscow. In order to form a favorable public opinion for Russia, the Kremlin politicians started a new political game. On April 21, 1995, the Chairman of the Government of Russia, V. S. Chernomyrdin, announced the readiness of the Russian side to negotiate with the command of the Chechen armed formations in order to stop hostilities without any preconditions. Five days after that, on April 26, President B. N. Yeltsin signed Decree No. 417 "On additional measures to normalize the situation in the Chechen Republic", declaring a moratorium on the use of armed forces in Chechnya from April 28 to May 12, 1995.



Negotiations in the Kremlin. Early 1996

Apparently, from the point of view of a politician of such a high rank, the suspension of hostilities in the midst of an offensive by troops is quite acceptable. From the point of view of military art, this is more than irrational. Any commander knows that every pause gives the enemy time to maneuver, gather strength and

to restore the defense, for the breakthrough of which new forces and means will be needed, new human sacrifices will be required.



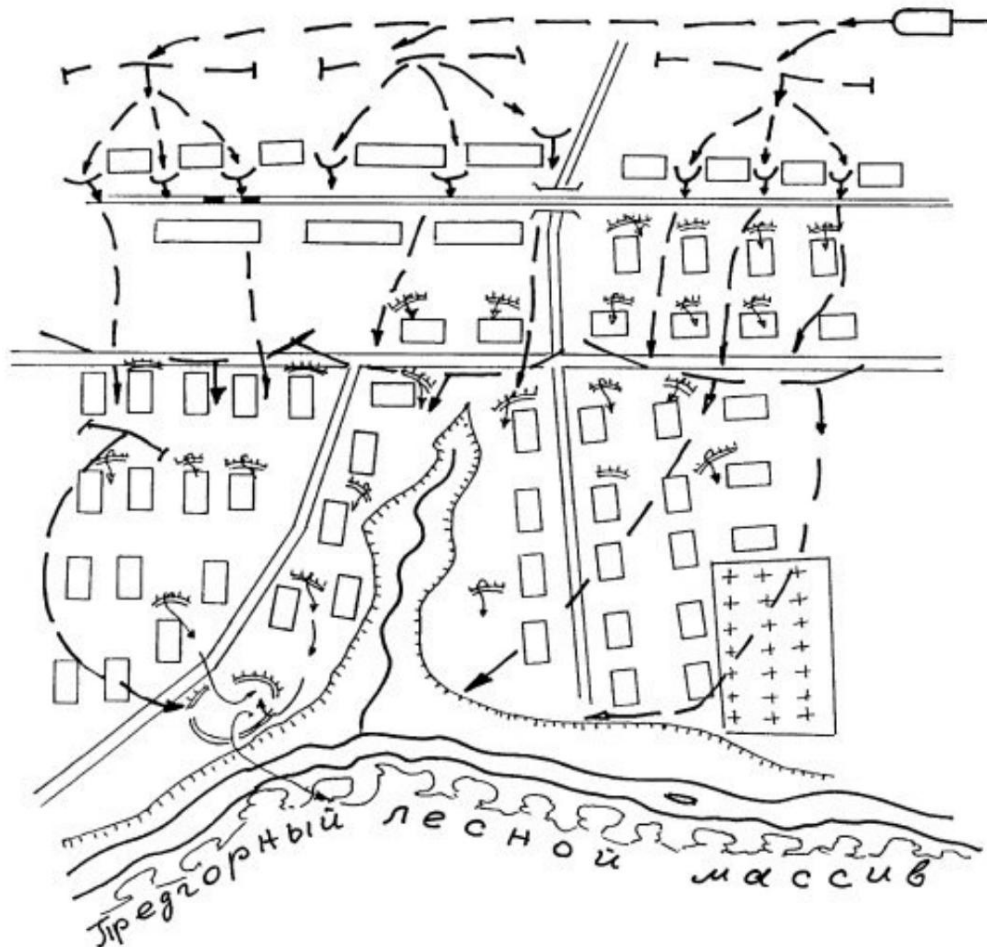
I wish you an easy win!

And the Chechens did not miss such a chance. Moreover, they themselves were not going to announce any moratorium on the conduct of hostilities. Moreover, the decrease in the combat activity of the federal troops led to an increase in the activity of militants. For 15 days, peace was violated by the Dudayevites 170 times, as a result of which the Russian troops lost 38 people killed and 223 wounded. The "moratorium" invented by their Supreme Commander-in-Chief paid dearly to the Russian servicemen. It should be noted that the Chechens themselves have always treated

negotiations with the Russian side with frank disdain. When General Gennady Nikolayevich Troshev, commander of the Joint Group of Forces of the Ministry of Defense in the Chechen Republic, flew in to negotiate with Aslan Maskhadov in Starye Atogi, the future president of Ichkeria delayed the meeting in every possible way. When the meeting took place, A. Maskhadov, without even listening to his opponent, categorically

demanded that Russian troops leave the territory of the republic. "Only after that

will we talk about a ceasefire and other issues," he said haughtily. And the Russian general was forced to leave Starye Atogi without salty slurping.



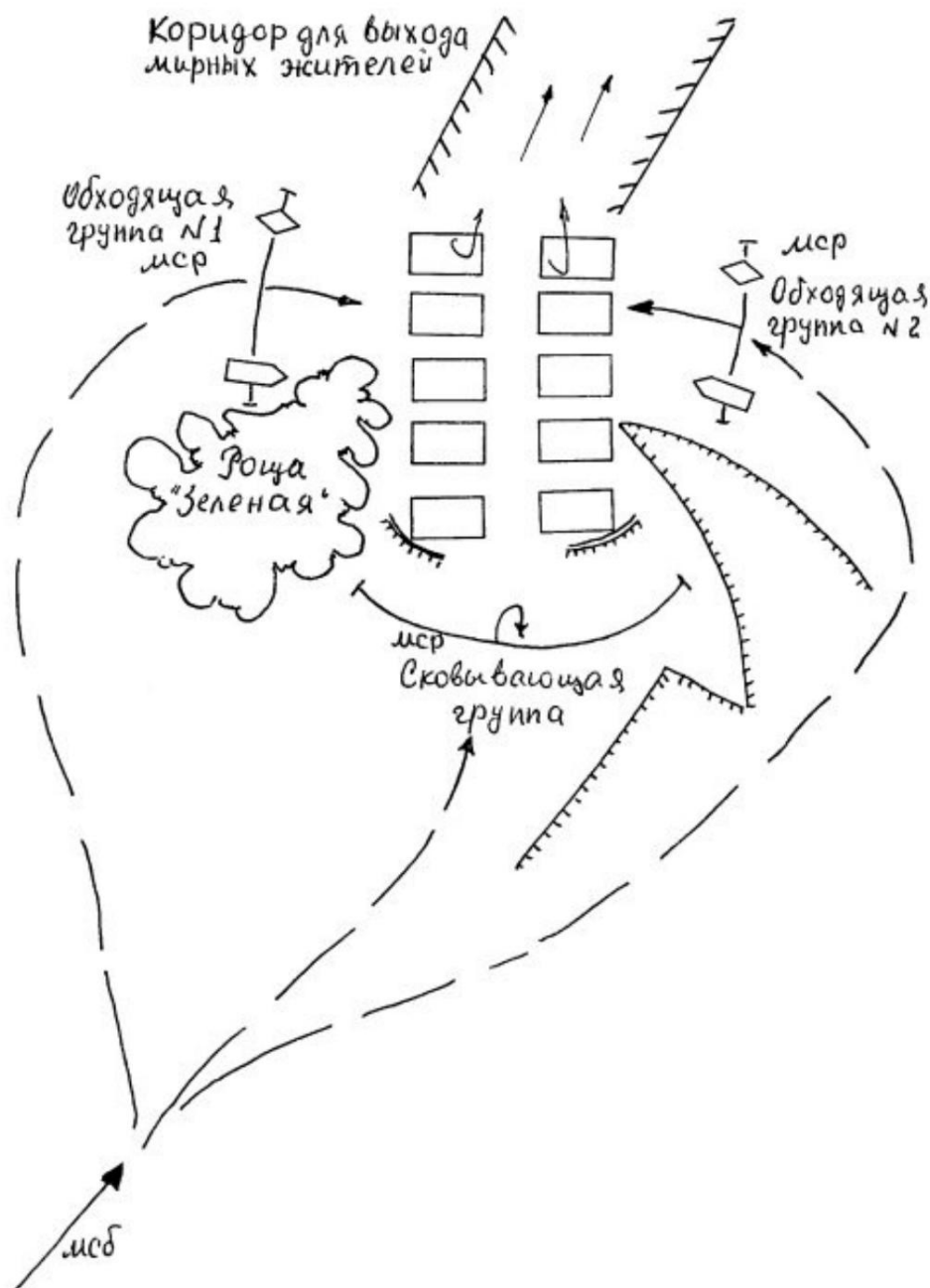
During the moratorium, the militants managed to covertly transfer significant forces to Grozny, build up defenses, and create new pockets of resistance. On the night of May 14, they began an intense shelling of the city from mortars and multiple rocket launchers. In just one day, Grozny was subjected to fire raids more than 18 times. Only after that did Moscow admit that the moratorium did not produce the expected results, and ordered the troops to continue combat operations according to previously approved plans. But the situation by that time had already changed a lot, and for the worse for the federals.

At the same time, the federal command continued to assert that Dudayev's forces were already running out. According to the press center of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, as of May 19, since the beginning of hostilities, the Chechens have lost about 12 thousand people, 74 tanks, over 110 infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers, 19 Grad multiple launch rocket systems, 146 guns, 15 anti-aircraft installations. According to some

indicators, this even exceeded the number of weapons that the Dudaevites had at the beginning of the war. The federal command was in no hurry to announce its losses. It was only as a result of a few rather sharp speeches by the media on this subject that official Moscow was forced to give some clarifications. Based on these official statements, it turned out that the human losses of the federal troops, as of the end of May, were estimated at about two thousand people killed

and more than five thousand people wounded. At the end of May, federal troops launched an offensive against the village of Vedeno from Shali. This advance was difficult to develop. In just four days, the units of the combined regiment of the Marine Corps of the Pacific Fleet operating there on the distant approaches to Vedeno lost 12 people killed and 29 wounded. Then, on the near approaches to the settlement, the federal troops lost another 10 people killed and 36 wounded. Nevertheless, by the end of June 3, Vedeno was taken. According to the Ministry of Defense, the losses of the Dudayevites in Vedeno amounted to more than 300 people killed, 8 tanks, 9 infantry fighting vehicles, 3 armored personnel carriers, 2 guns, 6 mortars, 6 Grad installations and 28 vehicles. But it was not possible to completely defeat the group of militants in this settlement. The remnants of the defenders of Vedeno retreated in the direction of Kiri, located south of this settlement and turned into a powerful stronghold. Where the indicated hundreds of corpses of the Dudaevites went to is also unknown.

During June 11–14, federal troops carried out an operation to capture Nochkai-Yurt and blockade Shatoi. Considerable time was spent on reconnaissance of the enemy, the development of an operation plan. Finally, on June 14, the federal troops moved to Nochkai-Yurt, but, to their surprise, they found out that the day before this settlement had been abandoned by the Dudaevites without resistance.



The events around Shatoi developed much more complicated. On June 11, an airborne assault was landed northeast of the settlement with forces up to a battalion of the 7th Airborne Division. Two days later, units of two motorized rifle regiments approached Shatoi from the east and from the north. According to the plan of the operation, the assault on the city was to be carried out by the joint efforts of troops from various

directions while isolating the area from the approach of enemy reinforcements from the south.

The operation began on 19 June. Almost immediately, deviations from the previously approved plan were revealed. So, a motorized rifle regiment advancing from the north, despite the presence of a head marching outpost, was ambushed by militants. Several infantry fighting vehicles were hit, people were killed and injured. The rest left the "fire bag" in the opposite direction and hastily entrenched themselves on the commanding heights.



Making a tough decision

After the first failure, the regiment commander decided to attack Shatoy from a different direction. Under the cover of night, having made a 30-kilometer march along roads soaked with rain, by morning the regiment's units reached the city from the west and occupied the dominant height. Units of another motorized rifle regiment, as well as a combined regiment of the 104th airborne division, were also withdrawn there. At night, a reinforced paratrooper battalion landed from helicopters east and south of Shatoi, blocking it from

this direction. Only after that the offensive, carried out on the night of June 20, was successful. But this time, the Dudaevites managed to avoid defeat. After a short firefight, they left the village and went into the mountains, taking with them all the heavy weapons and ammunition. Only after that, the Russian flag was raised over Shatoi.



On a combat mission

In mid-December 1995, elections for the head of the Chechen Republic were held on the territory controlled by Russian troops. By the will of the Kremlin, Doku Gapurovich Zavgaev was appointed to this position, with

with which Moscow tried to find a way out of the confusing situation.

Zavgayev

was born in 1940 in one of the villages of the Nadterechny district of Chechnya, graduated from the Gorsky Agricultural Institute, worked for a long time in the agriculture of the republic, since 1978 he switched to party work, where he made a rapid career, having gone from secretary to first secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Republican Committee of the CPSU and Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1991, at the request of R. Khasbulatov, D. Zavgayev was removed from his post as he took the side of the State Emergency Committee. He himself argued that the putsch had nothing to do with it, that the real reason for the displacement lay in the fact that they wanted to push him away from the Grozny oil, which other people had their sights on. But, apparently, a compromise was found. In return, D. Zavgayev received a warm place in Moscow in one of the permanent commissions of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation, and in 1993 he moved to work in the Administration of President B. N. Yeltsin, where he became a major specialist in national problems, especially Chechen ones. He was able to unite around himself some of the Chechen leaders who had certain connections in Chechnya itself in circles that were in opposition to Dudayev. After the election of D. Zavgayev, large funds and groups of Kremlin agents were sent to Chechnya. As a result, at the end of summer and autumn, the

intensity of hostilities in the North Caucasus somewhat decreased. But it was only the appearance of the world. There were too many forces and specific people in the country who were interested in continuing the war. And D. Dudayev himself did not strive for peace. Money was paid for something completely different, but there was not enough strength for open confrontation. Therefore, to replace the open confrontation of the

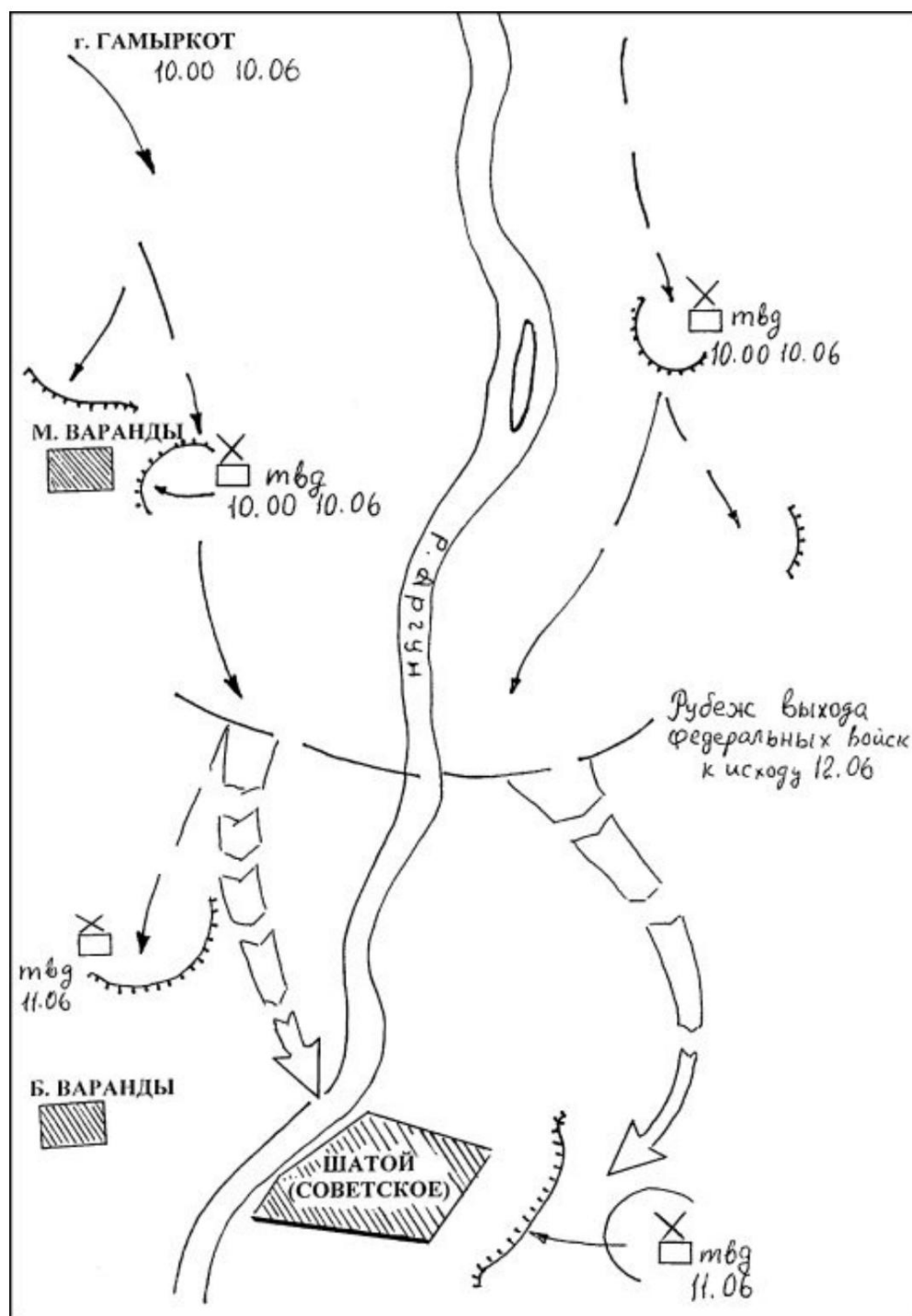
parties, the Chechens began to practice large-scale terrorist acts, which horrified the Russians. The new year 1996 did not solve the Chechen problem. Combat operations on the territory of Chechnya were still conducted in the foothill areas, from time to time moving to the north, to the rear of the federal troops. The Chechen tactics of guerrilla warfare were clearly stronger than the military art of the Russian command. Some settlements had to be stormed several times, but it was not possible to gain a foothold

In early March, federal troops began fighting for Sernovodsk and Bamut, located in the southwestern part of Chechnya. As usual, the settlements were subjected to air strikes and artillery shelling. Civilians and livestock died, houses were destroyed, but the militants did not give up. On March 5, an unsuccessful attempt by the Dudayevites to escape from Sernovodsk was reported. Having repelled it, units of the internal troops lost 5 people killed and 6 wounded. But themselves enter the village also

failed.

The battles on the outskirts of Bamut were just as unsuccessful. There, according to the federals, up to 400 militants were defending, led by field commander Ruslan Galiev. Their defense was built taking into account the difficult terrain of the mountainous terrain and the former missile silos, which served as a reliable shelter from air strikes and artillery fire. It only remained incomprehensible why, in the presence of precision-guided munitions and knowledge of the coordinates of the location of the mines, they were not destroyed? While the Russian generals were examining Sernovodsk and Bamut through binoculars, the Chechens launched a surprise attack in the capital. On the night of March 6,

they suddenly attacked six checkpoints in Grozny. According to the estimates of the federal side of the northern Staropromyslovsky district, more than a hundred Dudayevites advanced, detachments of 70–80 people acted from the Zavodskoy district and from the south. Two regional police departments were captured with all the weapons and ammunition they had, after which active battles unfolded in the area of Minutka Square and near the tunnel, located not far from the city center.



As always, the Russian troops turned out to be unprepared for an attack and could not destroy or at least isolate the enemy in a short time. The Dudaevites felt themselves masters of the situation, hiding in the ruins of houses and acting in small groups. Their snipers with well-aimed fire destroyed one Russian

after another, while remaining unharmed themselves. Military equipment was shot from grenade launchers or undermined by mines.



Loading the wounded into the helicopter

The next day, continuing the fighting in the city, the Dudaevites managed to take hostage 84 Russian builders who arrived to restore Grozny, and also disable a number of national economy facilities, including three water intakes. The fuel oil pipeline at the thermal power plant was blown up, as a result of which a fire started. They did not dare to extinguish it because of the shootout for a long time. The following days

became days of sniper warfare in Grozny. Shots were fired throughout the city, and fires blazed in some areas. During the first four days, federal troops lost 38 people killed, more than fifty wounded. As a "consolation", the federal command announced that about 170 militants were killed with weapons in their hands.

It was not until mid-March that the fighting in Grozny began to gradually subside. The Dudayevites either left the city, or, hiding their weapons, turned into "civilians". An investigation into how such a large force could have gotten into the protected city has yielded no results. The

Russian authorities clearly failed to cope with the Chechen problem. The military art of Russian generals sometimes did not fit into any framework - the Chechens imposed their own conditions for waging war on them. The Russian people grumbled muffledly, Western "voices" with might and main accused Russia of the genocide of the Chechens. Homegrown Russian "human rights fighters" sang along with the West with all their might. The time has come for summing up. They were unhappy. General V. Barynkin at a meeting of the State Duma was forced to declare that since the beginning of the war in Chechnya, 2,134 servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces had been killed. The general "modestly" kept silent about the losses of personnel of other power structures. There was no talk of losses among the Chechens.

Meanwhile, on March 9, federal troops entered Sernovodsk, abandoned by the militants. In the second half of the month, battles were fought, except for Bamut, in the areas of the villages of Samashki, Stary Achkhoy, Orekhovo. Many of them were stormed a

second, or even a third time. Another tragedy for the federal troops occurred on April 16, 1996 on the territory of the Shatoi region, whose administration had signed a protocol "on peace and harmony" shortly before. Reassured by this fact, the command of the 245th motorized rifle regiment did not provide proper protection for the column with rear equipment, which was coming from Khankala. It consisted of 250 personnel, 3 tanks, 15 infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers and 30 vehicles

with ammunition and military equipment. The militants did not want to miss such an opportunity. In the afternoon, south of the settlement of Yaryshmardy, the column was attacked by a detachment of 200 Chechens armed with small arms, grenade launchers, mortars, flamethrowers and heavy machine guns. The commander's combat vehicle was the first to burst into flames, the senior column, Major Terzovets, who was in it, died, and the control of the column was disrupted. After that,

the systematic destruction of one machine after another began. Cries for help filled the air, but they were not heard

straightaway. Only some time later, armored groups of two regiments (a total of 4 tanks and about 20 infantry fighting vehicles), a Mi-8 helicopter and a pair of Mi-24 combat helicopters went to help the dying column. The battle in the gorge lasted more than three hours. Having done their job, the Chechens went to the mountains. During this time, 53 military personnel from the convoy were killed and 52 wounded, a tank, an armored infantry fighting vehicle, 6 infantry fighting vehicles and 13 vehicles with cargo were destroyed.



Blessing for achievement

But by that time, apparently, the situation in the circle of militants began to change. The struggle for power began between the field commanders, gradually some people from Dudayev's inner circle were drawn into it. From the Russian side, the forces of the Main Intelligence Directorate and other special services were sent to Chechnya. By joint efforts, the Chechen problem was gradually brought to a new round of development, known only to a narrow circle of insiders.

At the end of April 1996, news of the death of D. Dudayev spread around Russia. According to information received, the Chechen president was killed on the night of April 22 near the village of Chekhi-Chu, located 30 kilometers southwest of Grozny. After the death of Dudayev, power in rebellious Chechnya passed to Zelimkhan Yandarbiev. But it seemed that some field commanders did not consider themselves obliged to obey the new leader.

Disagreements in the ranks of the field commanders were used by the federals. On May 24, after a four-day assault, the federal troops finally captured Bamut, which had previously been subjected to intense artillery fire. Batteries of 122-mm howitzers only during May 24 completed 166 fire missions to destroy individual objects and targets, firing over a thousand shells in the village. During the fighting, according to a representative of the Russian General Staff, about 350 militants were killed. The federal troops themselves lost 22 people killed and 54 wounded.

The capture of Bamut was presented as a great victory, after which it was again time for negotiations, which at that time became the main chip in the political game of the presidential administration.

Khasavyurt deal

With the approach of the presidential elections in Russia, political games have sharply intensified, including around Chechnya. From the lips of all the candidates persistently sounded the words about the need for a peaceful settlement of the conflict that was taking place in the North Caucasus. But no one seemed to know how to do it. Nevertheless, political fuss significantly complicated the position of Russian troops in Chechnya and created favorable conditions for the separatists. Skillfully using the temporary pause, they regrouped and replenished their stocks of materiel for future battles.

The first round of elections showed the instability of the positions of Boris N. Yeltsin, who was striving with all his might to remain in the presidency for a second term. Under the threat of re-elections, the Russian president took drastic measures - he sacrificed some people and brought others closer to him. The scapegoats were Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, FSB director Mikhail Barsukov, head of the president's bodyguard Aleksandr Korzhakov, and First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets. General Alexander Lebed, popular among the people, became Secretary of the Security Council instead of Oleg Lobov, and General Igor Rodionov, who "distinguished himself" in 1991 in Tbilisi, became Minister

of Defense. General Alexander Ivanovich Lebed by that time had become popular among the Russian people due to his stay with a peacekeeping mission in the rebellious Transnistria. A straightforward, somewhat rude-looking Russian peasant, abundantly pouring aphorisms, dressed in camouflage and surrounded by machine gunners, then seemed to many a powerful pillar in the raging elements. I personally happened to study simultaneously with A.I. Lebed at the M.V. Frunze Military Academy, which we graduated in 1985. Already at that time, Alexander Ivanovich sought to make a career and was not always picky in the choice of means. After quite a lot of votes were cast for A.I. Lebed in the first round of elections, he easily betrayed his voters and "came" under B.N. Yeltsin for the post of Secretary of the Security Council. True, having done his job, he did not stay long in this high post.



Rodionov Igor Nikolaevich, Commander of the Transcaucasian Military District (1988–1989), Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation (1996–1997), General of the Army

I have known Igor Nikolaevich Rodionov since 1975, when he, with the rank of colonel, was appointed commander of the 17th Guards Motor Rifle Division, which was stationed in Khmel'nitsky. At that time I also served in this unit. Then he commanded the 40th Army in Afghanistan, and since 1988 - the troops of the Transcaucasian Military District. Everyone who happened to serve under the command of I. N. Rodionov spoke of him as a competent and very tactful military leader. B. N. Yeltsin, by appointing this man to the post of Minister of Defense, earned the approval of the army, which was very important on the eve of a new round of elections.

In addition, the administrative resource and huge amounts of money were used in full measure in the pre-election campaign. All this turned out to be enough for B. N. Yeltsin to defeat the communist G. Zyuganov with a small majority of votes in the next round and retain the presidential title for another four years.



Position elections. 1996

The election time had hardly passed when the fighting in Chechnya flared up with renewed vigor. This time they were conducted in the areas of the settlements of Gekhi, Makhety and south of Vedenov. On July 15, having lost 8 people killed and 36 wounded, the federal troops entered the Gekhi left by the militants, estimating the loss of the latter at 70 people. Were they militants or civilians - it was not explained. As evidence, the media showed several captured small arms. It turned out that for one machine gun or machine gun there were up to ten killed militants. Weird arithmetic!

In the following days of the month, local fighting and shelling continued. Every day 5-10 Russians died, 10-20 were injured. And again it was reported about the destruction of large forces of militants. It seemed that the entire population of Chechnya, including children and women, took up arms. In

early August 1996, large Chechen forces suddenly unleashed fighting in Grozny, Argun and Gudermes.

The fiercest fighting took place in the Chechen capital, where, according to the federal command, there were at least 3,000 fighters. They simultaneously attacked important objects in five places in the city, including the center. One of the Chechen detachments under the leadership of Shamil Basayev tried to seize the buildings of the House of Government, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB of Chechnya. The attempt failed. But as a result of the fire, documents on the expenditure of huge sums of money received from Russia for the restoration of the republic's economy destroyed by the war "died". For this alone it was worth "inviting" militants to the city. In addition, large sums of money kept in the local branch of the bank, as well as a train with weapons and ammunition, which arrived in the city the day before, fell into the hands of the separatists.



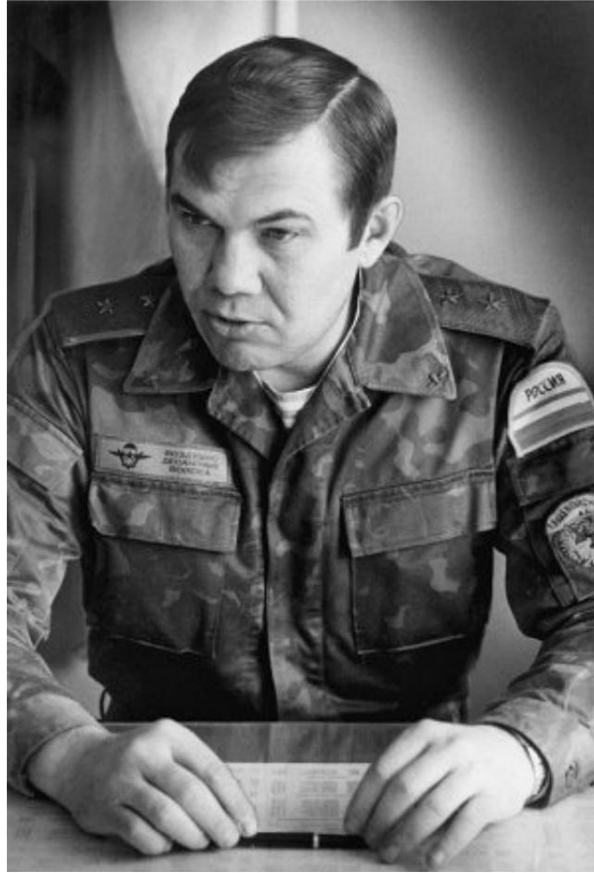
Combing the area

With the beginning of the fighting in Grozny, many Chechen policemen armed with service weapons went over to the side of the militants. Knowing the city well and the location of important objects, they became guides and spotters. The police commandant's offices surrendered to the separatists in other cities of the rebellious republic. This once again showed the complete failure of Moscow's calculations on local Chechen cadres. The events in Grozny

required the intervention of the Russian government. On August 12, Secretary of the Security Council AI Lebed flew to Chechnya for the first time. On the night of the same day, in the village of Starye Atagi, he met with the chief of staff of the separatists, Aslan Maskhadov.

The Chechen behaved frankly defiantly. By that time, only army units in the battles in the Chechen capital lost 96 people killed, 275 wounded, 30 missing, as well as 5 tanks, 16 infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers, 3 artillery systems. There was no end in sight to the fighting. But A.

I. Lebed, at the direction of Moscow, apparently, was looking for a way out with all his might from the established position.



Lebed Alexander Ivanovich, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (1996), Lieutenant General

At the first meeting, the exit was not found. The Chechen side felt its strength and saw the weakness of the Kremlin representatives. Aslanov was clearly enjoying the situation that had arisen and was deliberately stalling for time. He was ready to bargain, but he wanted to bargain for more. Lebed, well instructed in Moscow by specific people, was ready to make concessions, subject to certain material guarantees. Purely economic interests were behind the big political game. After the unsuccessful completion of the first round of negotiations, A. I. Lebed flew back to Moscow, where he received new instructions. Three days later, he returned to Grozny again, where
street

fight. This time he stopped in the suburb of Grozny, Khankala, where the main base of the federal troops was located, and held a meeting with Moscow's protégé in Chechnya, D. Zavgaev, the commander of the federal troops, General K. Pulikovskiy, and the Minister for Nationalities of Russia, V. Tikhomirov. But even this meeting yielded nothing.

Meanwhile, the fighting in Grozny did not subside, and the losses of the parties grew inexorably. By August 21, according to Chechen authorities, about 300 civilians had died in Grozny and more than a thousand were injured. The loss of federal forces killed and wounded exceeded a thousand people, there was no reliable information about the losses among the militants.

Information about losses among the federal troops constantly coming from various sources unnerved the Russian public. The Kremlin decided to "surrender" another guilty person to the people. The Secretary of the Security Council, who arrived in Chechnya, removed General K. B. Pulikovskiy from command of the troops. His place was taken by General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov. The next day, in Novye Atagi, Al Lebed met

again with A. Maskhadov. This time, an "Agreement on Urgent Measures for a Ceasefire and Combat Operations in Grozny and the Chechen Republic" was signed. According to this Agreement, from 12:00 on August 23, hostilities were to cease. At the same time, the withdrawal of federal troops from Grozny and some southern regions of the republic was to begin. On this day, it was officially announced that since August 6, 1996, 406 Russian servicemen were killed, 1,264 were injured and 130 missing in Grozny alone. The agreed terms came, but the Chechens were in no hurry to fulfill their promises. At the same time, they tried with all their might to capture as many weapons and ammunition as possible. So, on

August 24 in Grozny, militants stopped a column of internal troops and disarmed 58 servicemen. The next day, a detachment of 400 militants with armored vehicles blocked the support of the commandant's office in the Staropromyslovsky district of the capital and demanded that the military personnel hand over their weapons and ammunition and leave the city. In the of the federal forces in the city, the separatists showed that the separatists were using

another pause in hostilities, while maintaining control over the occupied areas. Returning from Chechnya, A. I.

Lebed met with Prime Minister V. S. Chernomyrdin, but was not allowed to see the president. "Moor" did its job and became unnecessary to the Master. Alexander Ivanovich tried to explain his "merits" to the Russian people with the help of the media, but the people, who had recently treated the general with obvious sympathy, this time did not want to listen to him. No one in Russia wanted a war with Chechnya, but no one wanted to see Russia groveling before the arrogant highlanders.



Toast "For victory!"

The Presidential Administration understood the Khasavyurt deal as a victory. On August 26, Boris N. Yeltsin went on vacation, promising to personally control all the events taking place in the country, and above all in the Chechen Republic. The "porridge" he had brewed twenty months ago was left to be disentangled by others, but most of all by innocent ordinary people, both Russians and Chechens.

Negotiations between Al Lebed and A. Maskhadov continued until the end of August. And only on the night of August 31 in Khasavyurt was signed the Statement on the principles of determining the foundations of relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic. Under the terms of this document, federal troops and militants were to leave Grozny during September.

The withdrawal of troops began at the beginning of September. The federal troops left Grozny with the appearance of the defeated, while the Chechens only demonstrated their withdrawal from this city, which completely passed under their control. The same processes took place in other "hot" regions of Chechnya. The war, in which, according to the most primitive estimates, about 80 thousand Russians died and at least 250 thousand more were injured and maimed, was officially over.

On November 23, 1996, B. Yeltsin signed the Decree "On measures to ensure further peaceful settlement in the Chechen Republic." The content of this document was the refusal of the federal center from the Decree "On the deployment of military command and control bodies, formations, military units, institutions and organizations of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Chechen Republic" dated July 3, 1995. The new Decree ordered the redeployment of the 101st separate brigade of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation and the 205th separate brigade of the Ministry of

Defense outside the Chechen Republic. On the same day, Chairman of the Government of Russia V. S. Chernomyrdin and Prime Minister of the coalition government of the Chechen Republic A. Maskhadov signed an agreement that provided for large financial injections of Russia into Chechnya with the aim of "solving the social and humanitarian" problems of the population of the republic affected by military operations. In addition, favorable customs conditions were created for the Chechens, as well as conditions for the extraction, processing, transportation of oil, oil products and gas, provided that "the Chechen side guarantees the safety of pipeline transport, oil and gas production and processing facilities." These two documents had

serious consequences. After the withdrawal of the last brigades of Russian troops from Chechnya, Moscow finally lost control over this "subject of the Federation". Taking advantage

With this, A. Maskhadov and his entourage became full-fledged masters in the republic and began to build their own state there, drawing funds for this, including through theft and oil refining. Hundreds of mini-factories appeared on the territory of Chechnya for the distillation of "black gold", which was "extracted" from the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline. Later, Russian money flowed into the Chechen Republic, intended for its "restoration", the funds of some foreign states and individuals. But this money was spent on completely different purposes ... The fact that the fire started in Chechnya is an

insignificant fact for the history of that Russia that was formed after 1991. It could break out in any other place in order to distract the people from the shameless redistribution of the property of the former Soviet Union. It was a time of impudent politicians, empty loud promises and territorial, material and moral losses unprecedented in the history of Russia.

At the very beginning, some of the journalists called the First Chechen War a "sold out war." Soon there was no doubt about it. It remains unknown only who, specifically, to whom and for how much sold this war? But it was no longer so important. In a burning house, it is not customary to look for an arsonist, but to save the most valuable or ... steal. It seems that the latter happened in Russia. And every thief hurried to get more good before the roof of the burning house collapsed.

Nest of terrorists

The unclear status of Chechnya after the signing of the Khasavyurt Treaty created fertile ground for a double interpretation of the events connected with it. The federal center, considering Chechnya as its subject, was engaged in "restoring order" on its territory. The Chechens, on the other hand, saw Russia as an aggressor, in the fight against which all means were allowed. This circumstance was the cause of mass terror, which the highlanders considered just a kind of guerrilla warfare. The recent history of

Chechen terrorism is quite rich. Here are just a few pages of this "chronicle". So, on May 26, 1994, in the

area of the village of Dagger in the Stavropol Territory, which is 30 km from Mineralnye Vody, four Chechen terrorists hijacked a Vladikavkaz-Stavropol regular bus. The hostage was a class of one of the local schools, which went on an excursion. Together with parents and teachers, there were about 30 people on the bus. The terrorists demanded 10 million dollars, drugs, 4 machine guns, 4 body armor, a grenade launcher, a night vision device and a helicopter. Negotiations began with the authorities,

during which the bandits released all the children and several adults. The next day, a helicopter with terrorists, as well as three women, a bus driver and three pilots, took off and headed for Dagestan. But soon, as a result of a lack of fuel, he changed the flight route and landed near the village of Bachi-Yurt in Chechnya. An hour later, the bandits were neutralized. The leader of the gangsters Magomet Bitsiev was sentenced to capital punishment, and two other participants in this crime - Temur-Ali and Ahmed Makhmaev - received 15 years in prison. But this case was only one link in a chain of other similar crimes.

Just a month later, on June 28, 1994, three terrorists, two of whom were Chechens, seized a Stavropol-Mozdok regular bus carrying about 40 people near Mineralnye Vody. The criminals demanded 5.8 million US dollars, three machine guns with ammunition, three portable radio stations, two helicopters and

plane prepared for departure at Makhachkala airport. But the idea failed. The next day, an operation to apprehend terrorists was successfully carried out near the Chechen village of Braguny. Appearing before the court, all three received 15 years in prison with serving in a corrective labor colony with a strict regime.

But another month passed, and on July 28, 1994, in the Pyatigorsk region, four terrorists of Chechen nationality again seized the Pyatigorsk-Sovetsky regular bus with forty passengers and demanded 15 million dollars. The operation to neutralize the criminals was carried out at the Mineralnye Vody airport. During the operation, one of the terrorists blew up a grenade in the passenger compartment of the bus, as a result of which 4 people were killed and 19 were injured. During the assault on the helicopter, one terrorist died, the rest were captured. All of them were sentenced to death by a court decision.

Thus, even before the introduction of federal troops into Chechnya, Chechens began to practice terrorist acts with the taking of hostages, the purpose of which was not to satisfy the political demands put forward, but the most banal - to obtain a ransom. This practice, known since the time of General Yermolov, had nothing to do with the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people, although it was often passed off as such by the bandits themselves and the forces interested in it.

In "renewed" Russia, this type of terrorism has become widespread in the North Caucasus. Ransoming hostages has become one of the most common ways to generate income. Those of the captives, for whom they could not pay, were doomed to slavery, and the use of slave labor in some territories of the North Caucasus, and especially in Chechnya, became the norm. It is quite clear that in these cases there is no question of any politics, and the main goal was only money.



Dead zone

Along with the taking of hostages and human trafficking, another type of terrorism appeared in the 1990s, associated with the seizure of hostages and objects under the guise of political

slogans. Especially terrible was the action held in the small Stavropol city of Budennovsk. On June 14, 1995, a group of 40-50 Chechen fighters suddenly broke into the city in two trucks. The bandits, firing indiscriminately from automatic weapons at civilians, rushed through the streets and entrenched themselves in the city hospital. A hundred and fifty more Chechens quickly arrived there, who, under various guises, entered the city in advance.

The terrorists took about a thousand hostages from among the medical staff, patients, local residents and prepared for defense. The field commander Shamil Basayev was at the head of the Chechens. A graduate of the Moscow Institute of Land Management, he easily changed his peaceful profession to a military one. By that time, on his "combat" account were

the hijacking of a plane from the Mineralnye Vody airport in 1991 and fighting in Sukhumi at the head of the Abkhazian battalion in 1992. The Chechen war made Sh. Basayev the third person in the inner circle of D. Dudayev. He knew how to fight boldly and cruelly, which earned him great popularity among militants and leaders of the underworld.

Only at noon did the local militia authorities inform the commander of a helicopter regiment stationed on the outskirts of Budyonnovsk about the attack of the militants. Colonel P. Rodichev sent a group of 32 officers armed with pistols to the city, led by the regiment's chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Yu. Konovalov. But the pilots turned out to be bad warriors in unusual conditions for them. The bus with the pilots was easily identified and fired upon by the Chechens. Six officers died, two wounded were taken to the hospital, where a little later they also died at the hands of terrorists. One of the two shot in the hospital was Lieutenant Colonel Yu. Konovalov. After entrenched in the hospital building by 4 p.m. and announcing that ten hostages would be shot for each killed militant, and five people for each wounded, Basayev put forward political demands. The main ones boiled down to the immediate withdrawal of federal troops from Chechnya and the start of negotiations between the Russian government and Dudayev. As expected, the federal authorities turned out

to be completely unprepared for operational work to counter such a large-scale terrorist attack. Only by the end of the next day, units of special troops were pulled into Budyonnovsk. The Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Viktor Yerin, and the director of the Federal Counterintelligence Service, Sergei Stepashin, also arrived there to lead the operation to free the hostages. The city hospital was surrounded by a tight circle through which only journalists were allowed to meet with Basayev.

For two days, the best forces of the special forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, under the leadership of Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs M. Yegorov, were preparing for an operation to storm the hospital and free the hostages. At the same time, the tasks of limiting the maneuver of militants, destroying their snipers and providing advantageous positions for units of the federal troops were solved.



Making a decision at the headquarters of the militants

An operation plan was developed. It provided for the initial capture of the building of the trauma and infectious diseases departments, then the laundry and garages, and only after that a decisive assault on the main hospital building. Support for the actions of the special forces was carried out by 14 infantry fighting vehicles, which, in order to ensure surprise, were supposed to approach 10 minutes after the start of the attack. In addition, four armored personnel carriers and a large group of snipers were allocated to suppress enemy firing points, which were located in advance along the perimeter of the hospital campus. The attack was scheduled for the morning of 17 June.

At half past five that day, the assault forces concentrated on their starting lines. 10 minutes before time "H", under the cover of a distracting fire raid, the first group of "Alfa" penetrated the territory of the hospital campus and, divided into subgroups, covered the garages and laundry areas. Two other groups to that

time approached the trauma and infectious diseases departments, taking the main building and the territory adjacent to it under the gun.

At the set signal, the Alpha fighters rushed to the main building of the hospital. But, as soon as they entered the open space, they came under heavy fire from heavy machine guns, grenade launchers and machine guns of the enemy. Chechens who broke through to a closer distance threw hand grenades. "Alfovtsy" lay down under the destructive fire of the

enemy, suffering losses. And for some reason, the promised combat vehicles were not there. They came only towards the end of the third hour of the battle, when the continuation of the assault on the hospital building had already become pointless. The commandos retreated, carrying five dead and more than thirty wounded comrades. No one said anything about losses among militants and hostages

didn't really know.

As soon as the federal leadership became aware of the unsuccessful assault on the hospital, the question arose of who gave the order to start it. As a result of the "trial on the spot" it turned out that the ministers Yerin and Stepashin, who were in Budyonovsk, "did not know anything about this action." It was announced that the special forces began the assault on their own initiative, and therefore, they were responsible for its failure, for the blood of the hostages.

True, later in some media there was information that the President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin, who was in Canada at that time at a meeting of the leaders of the "Big Seven", admitted that even before his departure, the issue of the assault had been resolved with Erin. But soon this unpleasant "fact" was tried

hush it all up.

Meanwhile, the events in Budyonovsk developed according to the Chechen scenario. On the night of June 18, Sh. Basayev held a press conference in the hospital building, which was attended by about twenty Russian and foreign journalists. After its completion, the terrorists released 186 hostages, leaving about 700 more people in captivity.

At three o'clock in the morning, Russian Prime Minister V. S. Chernomyrdin went on a direct telephone connection with the leader of the terrorists. Basayev demanded three conditions for the release of most of the hostages: to stop hostilities in Chechnya, to withdraw troops and to start

negotiations with Dudayev. Chernomyrdin agreed to the first two conditions, but flatly rejected the third. But Sh. Basayev did not make any concessions and declared that he was ready to continue the negotiations at 10 o'clock in the morning.

After another round of negotiations, the Chechen terrorist released another 200 hostages. In return, he put forward an additional requirement to provide his detachment with an aircraft for evacuation from Budyonnovsk. On it, he also intended to take out up to 200 hostages to ensure the safety of his militants.

At 4 p.m., the federal troops stationed in Chechnya were given the command to cease fire. The shooting also subsided in Budyonnovsk, where the victims of terror were buried. On this day, over 50 people were buried at the local cemetery, many unidentified corpses remained in the morgue. Talking about those who died in the hospital

did not go yet.

On the morning of June 19, negotiations began in Grozny between the Russian and Chechen delegations on the settlement of the conflict in Chechnya. At the same time, at the request of the terrorists, vehicles were sent to Budyonnovsk to evacuate them from the city. At noon, the Chechens with a small group of hostages began to cautiously leave the hospital building and board buses. At 14.20 the convoy of buses left Budyonnovsk and headed towards Mineralnye Vody. Only after that, the rest of the hostages, who were in the hospital building, gained their long-awaited freedom. The rest were released on the border with the Chechen Republic. Basayev and his terrorists managed to escape with impunity to

Chechnya, to areas controlled by the Dudaevites. There they were welcomed as heroes. The federal authorities silently swallowed the bitter pill they tried to "sweeten" with arguments about rescuing the hostages. The real result of the events in Budyonnovsk was 95 Russians who died or died from wounds, another 142 people were injured, and 99 became seriously ill. No casualties were reported among the militants.



The events in Budyonnovsk once again showed the complexity and inconsistency of the internal situation in the country, the weakness of the highest bodies of state power. Despite the promises of high officials, no answer was found to the question of how such a large armed group could break through into the depths of the Stavropol Territory, "reliably" covered by troops, police

and Cossacks.

Serious criticism was also caused by the actions of the federal authorities to free the hostages. The impression was created that, given the presence of a large number of high-ranking commanders in the conflict area, they were carried out without a single leadership, in the absence of a clear plan of action, their comprehensive support, and without organizing the interaction of diverse forces and means. The troops themselves did not act in

the best way, although elite units of the police special forces were assembled in Budyonnovsk. The poor leadership of the personnel, his insufficient combat training, and poor equipment had an effect. As a result of this - illiterate actions and big losses.

In this situation, the top leaders of the Russian Federation also looked unattractive. President Boris N. Yeltsin frankly distanced himself from the events taking place in Budyonnovsk. Prime Minister V. S. Chernomyrdin was forced to talk with the head of the terrorists, Sh. Basayev, practically on an equal footing, and then agree to the latter's conditions. Thus, Moscow once again, in the presence of a huge number of witnesses, signed its impotence to resist the actions of the Chechen fighters, carried out in such a brazen form.

Strange, if not more, can be called the reaction of some "eminent" Russians to the events in Budyonnovsk. On June 28, State Duma deputies Sergei Kovalev, Alla Gerber and Alexander Osovtshev, at a meeting with voters in the Moscow Cinema House, called Shamil Basayev "an outstanding personality and a Chechen Robin Hood." They announced a collection of signatures for his amnesty and were the first to put their names.

Yerin and Stepashin became "scapegoats" for Budyonnovsk, having lost their ministerial portfolios. True, a few years later, S. Stepashin even received the post of prime minister, from which, however, he was soon also dismissed and appointed head of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation. The Kremlin did not give up its people.



Children of war

The events in Budennovsk did not put an end to the bloody showdown between Moscow and Grozny. In Russia, new people were appointed to replace the departed power ministers, who also had no experience in fighting terrorists. This was fully manifested in subsequent events. The Russian government,

unable to solve the Chechen problem on its own, tried to find support in local personnel. The ancient principle of "divide and rule" often proved to be more reliable than military force. The time has come to apply it to the Chechen earth.

The federal authorities, wishing to show the strength of the new Chechen government of Doku Zavgaeov, on December 18 began an operation to blockade Gudermes, captured by the militants of Salman Raduev three days earlier. At the beginning of this operation, federal troops

formed a ring of encirclement around this settlement, in which corridors were left for the exit of civilians. For five hours, a continuous stream of refugees moved along them from Gudermes to Kortsalaya, and cars full of people, loaded with household goods, drove out. Pedestrians walked along the sides of the road, led and carried children, dragged laden sleds behind them. Columns of armored vehicles and "Urals" were moving towards them. Attack aircraft and combat helicopters darted through the sky. In the afternoon, from the direction of Gudermes, gun salvos, explosions of bombs and

shells, and machine-gun chatter began to be heard. Gradually, a cloud of black smoke rose over the city. Federal forces went on a decisive offensive. But the militants of S. Raduev did not defend Gudermes to the last man. True to their tactics, having shot a little, on December 24 they

left the city through numerous gaps in the combat formations of the federal troops. As a result of the action, 267 residents of the city and 31 Russian servicemen were killed. Accurate information about the losses among the militants, as usual, was not received. The capture of Gudermes by the federal leadership was presented as another big victory. The actions of the militants in Gudermes were sharply criticized by Dudayev. In one of the radio

intercepts, the general's angry words were addressed to a delinquent relative: "Gudermes was supposed to be a victory! And you are dogs and cattle, because you left Gudermes. I'm giving you one last chance to justify yourself." Then the federal command could not imagine what lies behind these words.

On January 9, 1996, at about 6 o'clock in the morning, a group of Chechens led by Salman Raduev broke into the Dagestan city of Kizlyar. On the way to it, they defeated a police checkpoint. One of the policemen was killed, the other two were taken prisoner.

After the destruction of the checkpoint, the militants moved to the field airfield of the internal troops, where they burned two helicopters. Then they entered the city and entrenched themselves in the hospital, driving there from nearby houses up to a thousand hostages.

The federal and local authorities, just like in the summer of 1995 in Budyonnovsk, turned out to be completely unprepared for an attack by the Chechens. On the number of Dudayevites who attacked Kizlyar during

For two days there were various rumors. S. Raduev himself, in an interview with journalists, said that he had 500 people at his disposal. This was not true. No more than 50 people arrived in the city by bus and KamAZ. True, there they were joined by up to 200 people who entered Kizlyar in advance. Thus, the commander of the terrorists named a figure that was twice the reality. But the federal authorities willingly believed in it.



Kilometer after mile...

On the evening of the same day, in Russia and abroad, a “strict” analysis by the president of what had happened in the presence of power ministers was demonstrated on television. For some reason, the director of the Federal Border Service, General Al Nikolaev, was presented as the main culprit. The enraged head of state wanted to know how such a large detachment of Chechens could penetrate the territory of the neighboring republic and capture the city? Nikolaev was guiltily silent, apparently forgetting or embarrassed to remind the head of state and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief that the main

the task of the border troops is to defend the external borders of the state, and not the borders between its subjects. Therefore, neither then, nor after the intelligible answer, as usual, was heard to the President's strict question...

At the same time, it became known that on December 23, military intelligence warned the structures responsible for the security of Russia about the preparation of the Chechens for an attack on Kizlyar. However, the data of the specialists of the Main Intelligence Directorate for some reason remained unrealized.

Meanwhile, the Russian leadership demanded decisive action from the power ministers. By the end of the day, 739 military personnel of the internal troops and 857 police officers were urgently gathered in Kizlyar. They were waiting for instructions from the government, which this time decided to show "character" and not directly enter into negotiations with the terrorists. Negotiations were entrusted to the authorities of Dagestan and the command of the federal troops in Chechnya.

Late in the evening, Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Dagestan Magomed-Ali Magomedov managed to meet with the leaders of the terrorists Salman Raduev and Sultan Gelishanov. In the demanded that course of the militants, the leaders negotiations be ensured for the unhindered return of their people to Chechnya. As proof of the honesty of their intentions, by midnight they released a large group of women and children from the hospital.

The local Russian authorities this time acted according to the previously worked out scenario. By the morning of January 10, at the request of the militants, 11 buses and three KamAZ trucks were delivered to the hospital. At 6.45 the Chechens, having put about 170 hostages on buses, left Kizlyar. They named the settlement Novogroznensky, located 50 kilometers east of Grozny, as the final destination for the column.

After the departure of buses with militants, Kizlyar summed up the results of the tragedy. Of the civilian population, 24 people were killed and several wounded. Losses of federal troops in this city amounted to 9 people killed and 42 wounded. It was announced that the militants themselves in Kizlyar lost 29 people

killed. At first, the release of the militants took place almost according to the Budyonnovsk scenario. The column freely reached the Chechen border in the area of Pervomaisky. But, as it turned out, the federal authorities on this

decided to act more decisively. Unexpectedly, the convoy with militants was fired upon from combat helicopters. After

that, the Dudayevites decided to return to Pervomaiskoye and gain a foothold in this settlement. The unit of 36 Novosibirsk riot police stationed there, who guarded this settlement, as always, turned out to be unprepared to meet the enemy. Not only did they not occupy the previously dug trenches, but they also did not offer any resistance to the militants. Having handed over their weapons at the first request of the Chechens, the riot police, "like sacrificial sheep," climbed into the buses. Later, they also meekly dug new trenches and communications, improving the now Chechen defense of Pervomaisky. Later, a version appeared that the Novosibirsk riot police surrendered in exchange for S. Raduev's promise to release the captured women and children. Perhaps that is how it was. But we should not forget that at the same checkpoint there was a large warehouse of weapons and ammunition, which also went to the Dudaevites. The question also arises sharply: who prepared the operation to seize the militants' buses without coordinating the actions of helicopters with the actions of riot police and other forces?



Temporary fortification on the outskirts of a Chechen city

Later it turned out that the decision to destroy the terrorist gang at any cost was made by the authorities shortly before the buses with the hostages reached Pervomaisky. The column of buses was already on its way when 150 paratroopers stationed in Chechnya were ordered to prepare for a flight towards Pervomaisky. They were tasked with blocking and destroying buses as soon as they crossed the border with Chechnya. First, attack aircraft were to strike at the column, then helicopters were to strike, and already the paratroopers had to finish off those who survived. There was no talk of hostages, since it was assumed that the terrorists would have to leave them in Dagestan. But this operation was not destined to take place.

The federal authorities again proved unable to foresee the development of the situation. Their confusion turned into a long pause, which allowed the Dudaevites to improve their defense in Pervomaisky. But they were not going to stand to death in this settlement. The terrorists hoped that the federal authorities would not risk the lives of the hostages and let them into Chechnya. Therefore, they cared more about political advertising than about the defense of Pervomaisky. This is evidenced by the fact that in the evening of the same day seven high-ranking volunteer hostages from the authorities of Dagestan were released. Returning to Makhachkala, some of them began on local television to denounce the Russian authorities as helpless and corrupt. Under the influence of these speeches, the mood of the Dagestanis began to change rapidly. Anti-Russian slogans sounded not only in the capital, but also in the mountain villages...

Then, in Pervomaisky, an epic began with the liberation of women and children. The Chechens seemed to let the women go, but they themselves did not want to leave without their husbands. At the request of the leaders of Dagestan to give them a few minutes to negotiate with the captured women, S. Raduev refused. - The hostages

deserved a big plus before Allah, helping the struggle for the independence of Chechnya. For them, it's like an opportunity to atone for sins, - said the leader of the terrorists.

The indecision of the federal command contributed not only to the strengthening of Dudayev's defense in Pervomaisky, but also to the decrease in the morale of the Russian troops stationed on the outskirts of this settlement. The soldiers were too hungry and cold to think about Raduev. Every day and hour they thought more and more about food and warmth. The leaders of the operation did not care at all about their subordinates - for three days the paratroopers never received hot food, they ran out of dry rations. On the third day, soldiers and special forces began hunting for cows, goats, geese, and chickens that had fled from Pervomaisky. With the onset of darkness, starving warriors from units less successful in hunting went to the nearest villages abandoned by the inhabitants, and dragged from there everything that could be eaten or used as a blanket. "Grandfathers" from the Makhachkala battalion of internal troops quickly found a common language with the men who remained to guard their homes, and drank with them "for the victory over Raduev." Discipline in the ranks of the federal forces was rapidly falling. On the morning of January 15, by decision of

the command, the federal troops began the assault on Pervomaisky. It developed extremely slowly - no one wanted to go out into the open, everyone was limited to a firefight from great distances. By 4 p.m. it became clear that the operation could not be completed during daylight hours, during which only a few managed to reach the outskirts of Pervomaisky. The militants were able to retreat in an organized manner to the central and southern parts of the village, where they put up stubborn resistance. Once again signing their impotence, the federal command late in the evening of January 15 stopped the assault on Pervomaisky and withdrew the troops to their starting lines for regrouping. The assault on Pervomaisky was carried out simultaneously

with an attempt to persuade the Dudayevites to surrender through negotiations. Director of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation Mikhail Barsukov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Russia Anatoly Kulikov and Minister of Internal Affairs of Dagestan Magomed Abdurazanov arrived in the area of hostilities to conduct them. However, S. Raduev refused to surrender.

At the same time, radio interception of the terrorists' conversation with Dudayev's headquarters took place. The Chechen leader warned his subordinate: "Do not conduct long negotiations, every word, every intonation -

against you. Prepare the policemen for execution and warn them about it. You can even shoot some... Keep a tough stance. They come to your aid... Consider yourself suicide bombers. Get ready to face Allah. Forget about everything earthly, then it will be easier for you. Come from the worst."

After deciphering this radio interception, the pointlessness of waiting for negotiations became apparent. By the end of the day, significant forces of federal troops were concentrated in the vicinity of Pervomaisky. They included more than two thousand personnel, a tank, 80 armored vehicles, 32 guns and mortars, 3 Grad installations, 16 flamethrowers. According to calculations, these forces were quite enough to prevent a breakthrough of terrorists and ensure their rapid destruction in a populated area. The next day, at 11 o'clock, a powerful fire strike was dealt to Pervomaisky

by combat helicopters. Next, units of the federal forces attacked a Chechen checkpoint located on the southern outskirts of the village. Although this checkpoint was taken, it was also not possible to defeat the Dudayevites in Pervomaisky on that day either. Small consolation for the federals was the release of four dozen hostages, despite the fact that even more remained in the hands of the terrorists.

hundreds of unfortunates.

The terrorists themselves acted more skillfully. In the middle of the night on January 18, a group of terrorists opened fire from the southern and southwestern outskirts of Pervomaisky. At the same time, a detachment of Dudayev's men, who had come from Chechnya through Nizhny Gerzel, hit the rear of the Russian troops from the Soviet side. A firefight ensued, which the federal command mistook for preparations for a terrorist breakthrough. All forces were thrown into the threatened direction.

In reality, the breakthrough was being prepared from the northwestern side of the settlement. There, at three o'clock in the morning, another group of Chechens, letting the hostages in front, suddenly attacked the soldiers, who were taken aback by surprise. As a result of short-lived hand-to-hand combat, about 40 Chechens led by Salman Raduev broke through the weak encirclement. They went to the territory of Chechnya, taking with them a group of hostages. Most of them were returned only on January 24, and again for certain concessions from the federal leadership.

It is time to take stock of the tragic events that took place in Pervomaisky. According to the Russian president, 153 terrorists were killed and 30 were captured in this settlement. The losses of the federal troops during the storming of the village amounted to 26 people killed and 93 wounded. As usual, no casualties were reported among the hostages and local residents.

The events in Kizlyar and Pervomaisky again demonstrated the inability of the federal authorities to solve the Chechen problem. The actions of the Russian government and power ministers on the ground were chaotic. The reasoning of the President - Supreme Commander-in-Chief Boris N. Yeltsin about how the hostages should be rescued is striking. "The streets are filled with smoke, and they run away... And when they run, you understand, on a wide front, it is much more difficult to kill them..." he said in front of TV cameras. One does not need to be great specialists in military affairs to understand the weakness of this plan, if not its complete inconsistency. The immediate leaders of the operation looked no better either. What happened in

Kizlyar and Pervomaisky among the Chechens singled out the figure of terrorist No. 2. Salman Raduev became it. Among the Russian journalists there were people who met with him earlier. About one of these meetings, the Moskovsky Komsomolets correspondent wrote:

"I met him last March (1995). Then, I remember, the correspondents of "MK" came to him - Dudayev's governor, in order to issue a pass, and at the same time to take an interview. Raduev received us fully armed in wartime - under the green banner of Ichkeria, placing a machine gun with a grenade launcher, a walkie-talkie and a pistol on the table in front of him. The real Tiger of the Caucasus...



War Road

Later, according to the custom of Caucasian hospitality, Raduev invited us to his home on the outskirts of Gudermes ... We drove in a brand new "seven" accompanied by two guards, one of whom, the Afghan Mujahid Khabibollah, equipped with a brand new "handbrake", sang Surahs from the Koran all the time. At home, throwing off his "bra" with grenades and body armor, Raduev suddenly turned from a formidable warrior of Allah into a thin teenage man. His wife invited us to the table. Before eating, Raduev and the guards retired to the next room to pray - it was the hour of the last, fifth, azan.

At the table, Raduev started talking again, by the way, a characteristic feature of many Chechen men is incessant talkativeness. Then we learned that he was about thirty, that he had a higher economic education, postgraduate studies and an almost finished candidate's degree. "I am a purely peaceful person by nature," Raduev murmured hoarsely. - Mo

I dream of everything in the world to turn my country, my Chechnya into a second Kuwait, plant it with gardens, decorate it with fountains, palaces and oil rigs. But now the realization of my dream is postponed. Now the war. We are being driven into a corner, and if this continues, we will spread the war to the territory of Dagestan. We took money and aircraft out of the republic and now we can fight as much as we like, and we buy weapons in Azerbaijan, Turkey, Sudan, Pakistan and Russia. There are such channels, and one of them is Russian contractors! There are enough weapons, even more than people. The last large batch, there is no secret, we received through Dagestan. It makes no difference to us where to fight, Russia has declared war on us, which means we will fight everywhere - in Dagestan, in Azerbaijan, in Georgia, in Russia itself, if only to kill Russian soldiers. Moreover, we now have high-precision weapons capable of hitting objects within a radius of 5-6 kilometers. Which of the Chechens took the side of Russia did not give a damn about the graves of their fathers. The panties are gone. A true Muslim is fighting here.

There hasn't been a real war yet, it's ahead! Jihad is the way of Allah and every Muslim is glad to die on this way. President Dudayev and the national congress decided to create special death battalions. More volunteers than needed. By decree of the President, such a volunteer is enrolled in the list of heroes of the republic even before his death! His name will be carved on the tablets of the history of the Chechen people! We will raise the whole Caucasus! We will make it Muslim! And in general, I don't know what I would do if it weren't for the war, I would probably be some kind of average official in the service of the economy, but now I respect myself, I feel like a hero, a true Muslim, the savior of my people and fatherland ... »

Such, according to the journalist, was Salman Raduev - the main culprit of the tragedies in Kizlyar and Pervomaisky, who once again fooled Russian politicians and generals, forcing them to sign their helplessness. At that time, in their materials, in pursuit of a "hot" fact, the Russian mass media cared little about the prestige of their state, about instilling patriotic feelings among Russian citizens. Terrorist S. Raduev for some time became a significant figure, on the information about which one could make money. And that was enough.

The January events, apparently, were also ambiguously assessed by the Chechens themselves, in whose upper echelons an internecine struggle had long been waged. This time terrorist No. 2 Salman Raduev and his family became its victims. True, later they wrote that in this way the Chechens took revenge for their relatives and comrades, abandoned by this field commander to the mercy of fate, or rather, to certain death, during his flight from Pervomaisky. True, there is no documentary evidence of any of the versions. Nevertheless, on the night of March 1, 1996, in Gudermes, the house of Raduev's father was shot from the Fly grenade launchers and the Shmel flamethrower. The inhabitants of the house and its guards perished. In the morning, 11 corpses were found at the site of the tragedy. How many people and who exactly burned down in the house remained

unknown.

Salman himself, who was away, at that time managed to avoid the fate of his relatives. However, a few days later, on March 5, 1996, near the village of Urus-Martan, he was seriously wounded by unknown persons and, according to official Russian

sources, died.

True, four months later, the "dead man" S. Raduev was resurrected and met with Russian journalists. He stated that after receiving a serious wound, he was treated in Germany, where, among other things, he underwent plastic surgery that changed facial features. Now, having returned to his homeland, S. Raduev was determined to re-engage actively in the struggle of his people against Russia and lead it to a victorious end, mainly by the methods of guerrilla warfare and mass terror. There was no need to doubt the promises of this man.

Some time passed, and the war in Chechnya officially ended. But terrorism has not been eradicated. On December 15, Raduyev's militants captured 22 Russian Interior Ministry officials, who were released four days later thanks to the intervention of separatist leaders and deputy secretary of the Security Council Boris Berezovsky. At that time, Boris Abramovich was presented in Russia as perhaps the most successful negotiator, who sincerely cared about the fate of the Russians who found themselves in Chechen captivity. Later it turned out that in his activities in the North Caucasus he pursued completely different goals ...

Soon this success was overshadowed by the execution on December 17 by a group of Chechen terrorists of six employees of the international Red Cross in the hospital in the village of Novye Atagi. Five of the dead were women and, in addition, citizens of Norway, Holland, Spain, Canada and New Zealand. All of them, at the call of various public organizations, voluntarily came to Chechnya in order to provide medical assistance to its residents. "Gratitude" for this humane act was death...

Shortly thereafter, Salman Raduev was captured by federal troops, sentenced to life imprisonment, and died in prison. Boris Abramovich Berezovsky, having safely taken out of the country billions of dollars, including those mixed with Russian and Chechen blood, safely "hid" in London, from time to time speaking on local television with anti-Russian statements. The evil he did to Russia and its people as Deputy Secretary of the Security Council remains to be dealt with.

The Chechen war and Chechen terrorism have shown that these are only visible manifestations of a huge secret struggle for power and money on the ruins of a superpower that until recently occupied a sixth of the land mass of our planet and pursued an independent policy. The empire collapsed under the weight of its own bureaucracy, which had long ago betrayed all sorts of ideals for the sake of material gain. Kites flocked to the wreckage, hungry for easy prey. Among these kites there were neither "ours" nor "strangers". They all look the same: cruel, cynical, merciless, completely indifferent to the fate of states and peoples. They have one goal - to snatch more from what was created for centuries by sweat and blood by the Russian and Soviet people, all its nations and nationalities. And if this required a war, the robbed people got a war, and for greater fear, terrorist acts were organized in Budennovsk, Kizlyar and Pervomaisky, explosions were heard in the Rostov region and in Moscow. And this is not surprising, any means for these people justified the goal that they set for themselves.



Once people lived in this house

Many people asked themselves the question: will the documents signed in Khasavyurt on August 31 by Secretary of the Russian Security Council A. Lebed and Chief of Staff of the armed formations of separatists A. Maskhadov put an end to the Chechen war and Chechen terrorism? The answer of the majority of experts was negative. The reason for this lay in the difference in the attitude of the parties to this document. The Russian side tried in this way to find a way to end the hopeless war for it without official recognition of its defeat. Chechen, according to its leader Yandarbiev, hoped in this way not only to consolidate their victory in the republic, but also to obtain compensation from the defeated side (Russia) for the material and moral damage caused by the war. But the main thing was different - there was a need for a hotbed of tension on the territory of Russia, which would divert the attention of its people and

allowed individuals to plunder the state with impunity. The Chechens were also not going to lay down their arms, hoping in this way to earn support, and most importantly, to receive money from abroad. Therefore, both sides, in order to achieve their goals, decided to postpone the issue of the status of Chechnya until December 31, 2001.

Attack on Dagestan

After the official end of the Chechen war and the signing of the Khasavyurt agreements, Russia created ideal conditions for the separatists to pursue their political goals. The official head of the Chechen Republic, D. Zavgaev, was rapidly losing power in the republic, which passed to field commanders. The same, having decided that by signing the agreement, Russia officially recognized its defeat and their strength, they behaved frankly defiantly: they took control of entire regions, appointed heads of administration and other officials, created armed formations under the guise of national police, cracked down on objectionable persons, conducted trade oil products and drugs, trafficked in people, controlled federal funds sent to Chechnya. Zavgaev has repeatedly spoken out against the terms of the agreement, but Moscow, busy with the presidential election, did not hear his voice. Moreover, the attitude of the Kremlin towards its henchman in Chechnya soon began to change for the worse. In the end, he was openly told that his presence in Chechnya was undesirable, and he was offered the post of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the United Republic of Tanzania. Power in Chechnya was planned to pass into the hands of the

separatists. On January 27, 1997, the former Colonel of the Soviet Army, Aslan Alievich Maskhadov, became President of the Chechen Republic. He also received the portfolios of the chairman of the government (prime minister), chairman of the defense committee and the security council. Aslan Alievich

Maskhadov was born in 1951 in Kazakhstan, where the Chechens were evicted. He belongs to the teip alira - one of the most noble teips of Chechnya. It is believed that this teip traces its history back to the mythical Ichkerian teips of the Nokhchmakhoy tribe, who descended from the mountains and founded Chechnya in ancient times. True, this teip is in competition with the teip of the Malkhi tribe, to which Dzhokhar Dudayev belonged. Although Malkhi could not boast of the antiquity of their origin, they became famous for their militancy during the wars with Russia in the 19th century. native village

Maskhadov - Zandak - is located in the thicket of the Ichkerian forest almost on the border with Dagestan.



Ahead - Dagestan

In 1972, Aslan Maskhadov graduated from the Tbilisi Higher Artillery School, served in various positions in the Soviet Army, and in 1990 met in Vilnius as a deputy division commander. In 1991, he retired from the Soviet Army with the rank of colonel and arrived in Chechnya, where he immediately entered the service of D. Dudayev. In 1993, he took up the post of chief of the main headquarters of the Chechen armed formations. During the First Chechen War, he was the chief of staff of the defense of Grozny and the Minister of Defense of the Chechen Republic. In 1996, in his native village, the future president began negotiations with the

Russian general Romanov. There was also one of Maskhadov's oil rigs. There were rumors in Chechnya that the negotiations were started by the Chechen leader, among other things, in order to save his property from Russian air strikes.

Proof of this may be the fact that after the assassination attempt on Romanov, the tower was immediately destroyed by the GRU special group.

During the Chechen war of 1994-1996, the Maskhadov family - Kusama's wife, daughter and son - were in the Nadterechny district in the village of Zebir-Yurt, where the future president graduated from high school and had many relatives and friends.

In parallel with these positions, from October 1995 to January 1997, Aslan Alievich was also the prime minister of the coalition government of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Thus, his path to big politics was consistent, although rather swift. After the signing of the Khasavyurt agreement,

Ichkeria elected a new parliament, with Ruslan Alikhadzhiev elected as its chairman. In parallel, by presidential decree, the Supreme Sharia Court was formed, which immediately began to claim the supreme legislative power. The conflict between the secular and spiritual branches of power ended with the fact that the Supreme Sharia Court removed R. Alikhadzhiev from office and suspended the activities of the parliament, citing the fact that all adopted laws should be strictly based on Sharia. Parliament, in turn, declared the Supreme Sharia Court illegal for the reason that it was not popularly elected. To normalize the conflict, the Chechen government proposed the creation of Shura, a state council consisting of alims

and respected field commanders. On February 3, 1999, A. Maskhadov announced on national television a decree on the introduction of full Sharia rule in Chechnya.

The budget of Chechnya was largely based on the infusion of funds into the republic from the Russian budget, their receipt on the territory of Russia by various criminal Chechen groups, the extraction and processing of oil on the territory of Chechnya itself, the drug trade, the kidnapping and sale of hostages, and receiving financial assistance from abroad.

Oil has traditionally been considered the main wealth of Chechnya. According to official sources, in 1997 two million tons of oil were produced on the territory of the republic, in the next - about 700 thousand, and in January - May 1999 - only 96 thousand tons. But that's only

official data. In reality, the volume of illegal oil refining in Chechnya was constantly growing, and the theft of this valuable product from the oil pipeline was constantly carried out. It is known that at the beginning of 1998 revenues from the oil business alone brought Chechens up to \$3 million a month, which means about \$35 million a year.



Aslan Maskhadov

But there were other lucrative sources of income as well. Thus, the drug business, according to official Russian data, annually brought the Chechen Republic an income of about 800 million dollars, but in reality it was much more significant. Many trade routes were laid through the territory of the Chechen Republic, which went further to the territory of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Grozny's airport has become a hub for drug smuggling, arms trafficking and other illegal operations on an international scale.

The taking of hostages also gave a lot of money. In the period from 1997 to July 1999 alone, more than 1,350 people were abducted in Chechnya, of which more than 800 were sold. By the fall of 1999, about 1,300 unfortunates continued to languish in captivity. True, the amounts earned in this way have never been announced.

The financial assistance to Chechnya from foreign countries and individuals was very significant. The Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper of October 7, 1999 reported that in the current year alone it amounted to \$50 million. Based on

these figures, it can be assumed that the Chechen Republic, while actually producing nothing, at that time received about one billion dollars annually. Of course, this money ended up in the pockets of a narrow circle of people and was spent only on very specific programs.

At the same time, the economic situation and, consequently, the internal situation in Chechnya were constantly deteriorating. This led to the exodus of thousands of inhabitants from the republic. If by the end of 1996 in Chechnya, according to official sources, there were 600 thousand inhabitants, then by August 1999 there were only 320 thousand of them, of which 20 thousand were Russians by nationality. In total, 220,000 Russians and more than 500,000 Chechens left the republic during the period of "democracy". Neither Dudayev's regime, nor Maskhadov's regime wanted to feed "extra mouths" that did not bring

profit. Thus, in the late 1990s, the Chechen Republic, as a completely independent territory from Moscow "within the Russian Federation," was turned into a huge training base for militants and a zone for laundering dirty money. Despite this, the Center "out of the kindness of the soul" to the detriment of its own citizens, in the period from 1996 to 1999, directed another 2.5 billion rubles, that is, a billion annually, to "restore" the ruined national economy of Chechnya. This money, of course, partially ended up in the pockets of Moscow officials, while in Chechnya itself it was spent on completely different purposes.

Chechnya was actively arming, its paramilitaries were strengthening. By the beginning of September 1999, according to official information, A. Maskhadov had quite large regular formations at his disposal, the total number of which reached 20

thousands of people. Structurally, they were separate units led by field commanders. Among the largest formations were:

The Presidential Guard, led by Ilyas Talkhabov, which consisted of an air assault and motorized rifle battalion, a presidential guard company, a guard of honor company and a cavalry company, which included a total of about two

thousands of people.



Shoot to kill

"Chechen army", consisting of personnel formations with a total number of about 1,500 people and their trained reserve, numbering up to 15 thousand people. "Abkhazian"

airborne assault battalion of field commander Shamil Basayev. Muslim battalion of field

commander Arbi Baraev, disbanded by Maskhadov's order, but really existing.

Galanchozhsky regiment of special forces field commander Ruslan Galaev. Shali tank regiment, consisting of three tank battalions and a division of self-propelled guns, commanded by

carried out by field commander Saiputdin Isaev.

Mountain rifle regiment of field commander Ibragim Arsanukaev.

And also:

two motorized rifle regiments, each of which had three motorized rifle battalions, artillery, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery divisions; infantry regiment (three framed infantry battalions, artillery, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery divisions); regiment of multiple launch rocket systems consisting of three divisions; anti-aircraft artillery regiment (three divisions of air defense systems); anti-tank regiment (three battalions of anti-tank guided missiles and one artillery battalion).



Prayer to the god of war - artillery

In addition to these formations, the structure of the armed forces of the republic had some separate combat support units, units of the customs and border services, as well as the forces of the Ministry of Sharia Security. If we imagine that all these troops were in the territory of a small mountainous

republic, which was practically not engaged in any production, it is not difficult to imagine the further actions of its leadership.

Dagestan.

The Chechen separatists decided to inflict a new blow in Dagestan, where their emissaries had been operating for a long time and which was traditionally associated with Chechnya by joint actions against Russia.

According to federal intelligence, on August 2, 1999, a large group of Chechen fighters (about 500 people) crossed the pass that separated Chechnya from Dagestan, hoping to start an uprising there. The local authorities reacted very sluggishly to their appearance, while the federal authorities did not react at

all. Two days later, the second detachment of militants (about 2 thousand people), led by Sh. Basaev and Khattab, also invaded the territory of Dagestan, capturing a number of villages. Basaev announced the creation of the Islamic state of Dagestan on the occupied territory. But the population of Dagestan itself regarded this as aggression on the part of

Chechnya and resisted. On August 3, Russian military formations came to the aid of the Dagestanis. The overall leadership of the operation was taken by the commander of the internal troops, Minister of Internal Affairs Vyacheslav Ovtchinnikov. But the operation never started.



Roadside conversation

On August 18, 1998, an "Islamic republic" or "a territory where Sharia law is in force" was declared on the territory of the Dagestan villages of Kadar, Karamakhi and Chaban-makhi in the Buynaksk region. The Russian media hastily dubbed the militants and the residents who joined them "Wahhabis." Later they wrote that the inhabitants of these villages refused to obey the official Dagestan authorities, declared their desire to live only according to the laws of Allah. They hoisted a green banner and called elections to the Muslim council - Shura. Armed self-defense checkpoints were set up around the villages. Trenches were built on the slopes of the mountains, machine-gun nests were reinforced with concrete blocks, approaches to villages were mined. During the summer of 1999, groups of Chechen fighters constantly infiltrated Dagestan and settled in the villages where the Wahhabis lived. In August, they began military operations against the federals and local police in the

Tsumadinsky and Botlikh regions of the republic, and on August 7 they tried to capture the entire Tsumadinsky region.

These events coincided with the accession to the post of Prime Minister of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin. In agreement with the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and President B. N. Yeltsin, the new prime minister immediately decided to crush the militant detachments in the areas they occupied.

However, the first raid actions of the federal forces in the direction of Botlikh, Agvali, Gakko did not produce significant results. This was explained by the fact that the troops had to operate on terrain crossed by "bizarre folds of highlands covered with dense vegetation" against an enemy waging a guerrilla war and having good intelligence. On August 17, the federal authorities reported that a detachment of up to 2,000 militants was concentrating on the territory of Chechnya near the border with

Dagestan with the aim of invading the adjacent territory. And although the plans of the Chechens were very obvious, no preventive strikes against this group followed.



Rushailo Vladimir Borisovich, Minister of the Interior of the Russian Federation (1999–2001), Colonel General

Instead, the next day, Interior Minister V. Rushailo, his adviser A. Shkirko, and Defense Minister I. Sergeev arrived in Makhachkala, accompanied by Deputy Chief of the General Staff M. Klishin. Measures were discussed with the local leadership to end the fighting in the Botlikh region, where the militants held the villages of Rakhta and Ansalta. After that, the People's Assembly and the government of Dagestan on August 19, 1998 adopted a resolution that stated: "Recognize the actions of the extremist forces of the village of Kara-makhi and Chaban-makhi of the Buynaksky district as unconstitutional and posing a threat to the security of Dagestan, its unity and integrity." By that time, the situation in Dagestan had deteriorated sharply. It turned out that

in the Botlikh region, the separatists were holding not two, but five settlements: Rakhta, Ansalta, Shodroda, Tando, and the ruins of Zibsrkhali. "Forced out" from the Tsumadinsky region, a detachment of 400 militants fortified in the Khilidi region, another - 500 people - in the Kenkhi region. In addition, about 150 more militants were found in the area of the Dagestan mountain Onshitligun.



Sergeev Igor Dmitrievich, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation (1997–2001), Marshal of Russia

The presence of such a large grouping of the enemy required the decisive intervention of Moscow, and the prime minister took over these functions. V. V. Putin entrusted the direct leadership of military operations in the Botlikh region to the commander of the 58th Army, Major General V. Shamanov. At the direction of the latter, on August 21, the federal troops regrouped and from the morning of the next day resumed active hostilities in the Botlikh region.



On the night of August 24, federal troops, after air strikes and artillery fire, launched a general offensive against the village of Tando. On the same day, they established control over the Rakhim pass and began to "cleanse" the Tsumadinsky district. At the same time, the main dominant heights over the rebellious villages of the Botlikh region were captured. On August 26, the federal command announced that the military operation in the mountainous region of Dagestan was "practically completed."

It's time to deal with the local Wahhabis. In the early morning of August 29, SOBR units from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, under the pretext of carrying out "actions to seize weapons from local residents," began an assault on the fortified areas of the Islamists located near the villages of Kara-makhi and Chaban-makhi, Buynaksky district. In reality, this "action" was expressed in the systemic military actions of the parties, which dragged on for a long time.



Vladimir Shamanov, Commander of the Group of Forces in the Caucasus

The events in Dagestan received a terrible response in various regions of Russia, where terrorist acts were committed at that time. Already on September 3rd, the first explosion thundered in Moscow, in a shopping mall on Manezhnaya Square. Late in the evening of the next Saturday, when tired people gathered in their apartments, and the children were getting ready for bed, in the military camp of the 156th brigade of the Russian Ministry of Defense in the city of Buynaksk, an explosion completely destroyed one five-story building and damaged three more. 64 people died and 146 were injured. Mostly they were women and children.

On the night of September 9, a new explosion thundered in Moscow on Guryanov Street in Pechatniki. A 9-storey residential building was blown up, partially

Two more nearby houses were destroyed. And again, about a hundred dead, dozens of wounded and maimed. At six

o'clock in the morning on Monday, September 13, another explosion was heard in Moscow. This time, a residential building on the Kashirskoye Highway took off. As a result, another 106 people died.

Three days later, in Volgodonsk at 6 o'clock in the morning, a GAZ-53 filled with 350 kilograms of TNT was blown up near a multi-storey residential building. The facade of the house collapsed, burying people and their property under the rubble. 18 people died and more than 300 were injured.

While Russia and its capital, numb with horror, mourned the dead and tried to organize self-defense of their homes, a new stage of the military operation began in Dagestan. At dawn on September 6, a detachment of Chechen fighters numbering up to two thousand people broke through from Chechnya to Dagestan and captured seven villages and the regional center of the Novolaksky district itself. After that, fortification work was immediately started there to create a circular defense. The remaining four villages of this region came under fire from the separatists, who occupied the dominant heights in their vicinity. The bandits also tried to capture the city of Khasavyurt, but were not successful.



Awards to policemen for distinctions in Dagestan

At that time, in Dagestan, the federal command had only two brigades, one each from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the total number of personnel of which did not exceed 10 thousand people. With such a balance of forces and means, the hostilities could hardly have reached their logical conclusion. Significant reinforcements and regrouping of

forces were required. In the meantime, fierce battles were fought for every settlement, for every height. The initiative gradually passed to the federal command. On Sunday, September 12, Russian flags were raised over the ruins of Kara-makhi and Chaban-makhi. At the end of the month, it was officially announced that Dagestan had been liberated from Chechen gangs. This was the first military success of the government of VV Putin in the Caucasus region, his first victory over Chechen extremism.

Return to Chechnya

After the end of hostilities in Dagestan, the federal leadership decided to take on Chechnya. The official reason for the action was the presence of numerous militant training bases on its territory. But they knew about these bases even before... Unofficial - the approaching parliamentary elections and the desire of the president's inner circle to disrupt them by introducing a state of emergency in the country. This required a war. On September 23, federal aviation

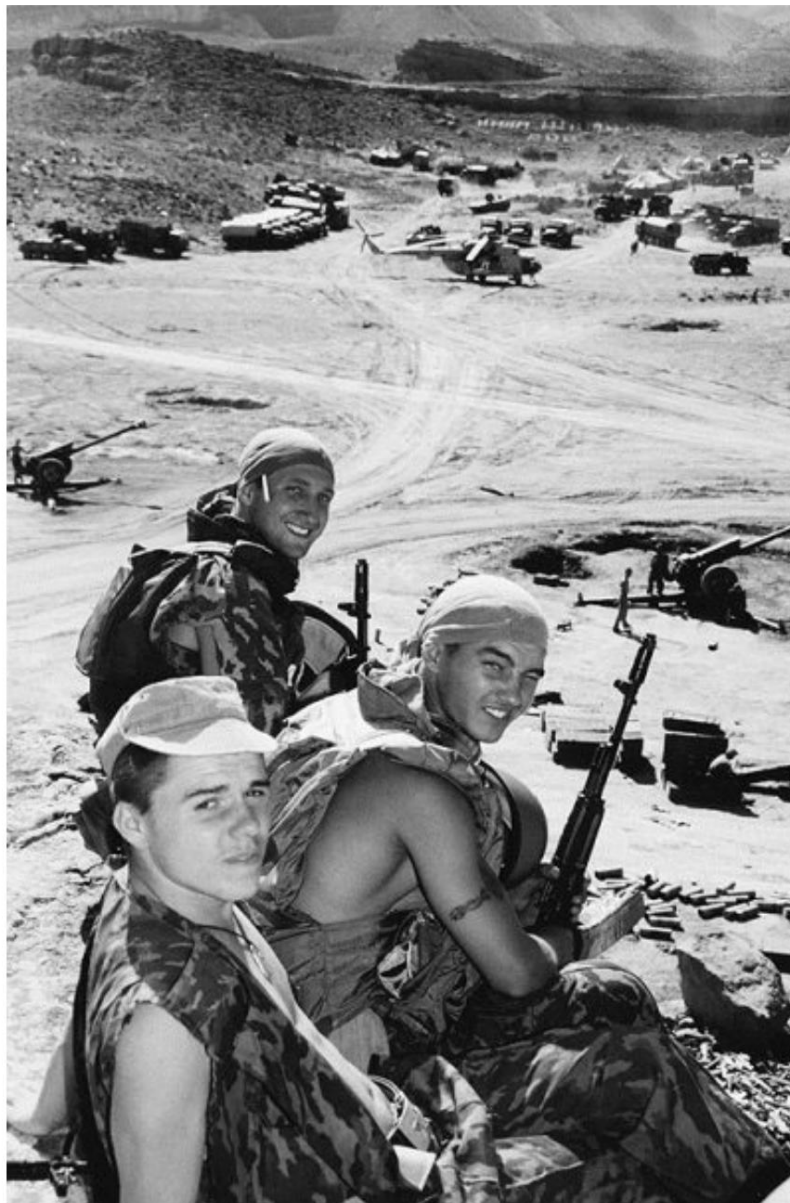
“began to carry out the assigned tasks of destroying militant groups, weapons depots, terrorist training centers, roads, bridges, mountain passes, command posts, including radar stations, repeaters, as well as aircraft that can be used by militants for supply of ammunition, weapons and other means of conducting armed struggle. First of all, an AN-2 aircraft of a purely civilian purpose was hit by an accurate missile strike at the Grozny airfield. At the same time, the plane of President Aslan Maskhadov, which was standing nearby, turned out to be unharmed for some reason.

The next day, Russian aviation made over 70 sorties into the territory of Chechnya. Several oil refineries were hit in order "to disrupt the supply of fuel to the separatists, to hinder their maneuver both on the territory of the republic and outside it." But this time too, so-called pinpoint strikes took place, which hit only strictly defined and far from the most important targets.

The ground operation began in early October 1999 with offensive movements of federal troops into the territory of Chechnya simultaneously from several directions. At the same time, the first task was to occupy the northern part of the republic and reach the border of the Terek River, as well as to the Nadterechny region. In the east, it was envisaged to capture the dominant heights on the border of Chechnya and Dagestan. In the west, attacks were being prepared on the settlements of Sernovodsk, Samashki, Achkhoy-Martan and Bamut. At the second stage

operations, the federal forces were supposed to complete the capture of the rest of the flat part of the territory of Chechnya.

To solve these problems, three groupings of troops were created: the western one, led by General Vladimir Shamanov, the northern one, led by Lieutenant General Ivan Babichev, and the eastern one, under the command of Lieutenant General Gennady Troshev. All these military leaders participated in the previous Chechen war, where they "showed themselves well." Now they were called up under combat banners from different parts of the country in order to, relying on previously accumulated combat experience, complete the work they had begun.



Winners

The beginning of the ground phase of the operation of the federal forces was successful. By October 5, the troops reached the Terek line, losing only 4 people killed and 22 wounded. Knowledge of the situation, constant aerial reconnaissance, significant superiority in forces and means, the unwillingness of the militants to take battle on flat terrain, and much more had an

effect. After that, the organization of the federal government began in the controlled areas. At the first stage, this took place in the form of the establishment of district commandant's offices and positions of military commandants. Only Russian military leaders were appointed to the positions of commandants. So, Lieutenant-General Gennady Nikolaevich Troshev, Deputy Commander of the North Caucasian Military District, became the commandant of the Shelkovsky District. The Naur region was entrusted to the commander of the 58th Army, Major General Vladimir Shamanov.

In parallel with the military, an attempt was also made to create a civil government in the Chechen Republic. For this, members of the former anti-Dudaev opposition, which had previously been "in exile" on the territory of Russia, were mobilized. Such a body of local government as the People's Assembly of Chechnya, the 1996 convocation parliament, was restored. On September 7, the People's Assembly formed the State Council - the highest executive body of the republic - and appointed its chairman. It was 34-year-old Malik Saidullayev, unknown to anyone until then, who immediately declared that now the most important thing is to "cleanse Chechnya of those who disgrace the people and prevent everyone from

living a normal life." The new Chechen leader was, as they say, a man of difficult fate. He was born in the village of Alakhn-Yurt, Urus-Martan District. In the late 80s, he tried to become a farmer, but failed, and until 1991 he worked as a simple shepherd in the Stavropol Territory. Then, having "befriended" in some incomprehensible way with German Sterligov, he becomes a co-founder of the Alisa exchange, one of the largest "air" projects of post-reform Russia. After the collapse of the stock exchange, with the help of Artem Tarasov, Saidullaev founded

concern "Milan", which received the main income from the all-Russian television lottery "Russian Lotto". It is not surprising that in the fall of 1999, with the approval of B. N. Yeltsin, a person with such rich political and life experience was entrusted with the management of the rebellious territory. By that time, a significant part of the

population of Chechnya was already quite tired of hostilities and other hardships. With the start of a new war, the flow of refugees from Chechnya to the neighboring republics increased sharply, where huge camps overflowing with unfortunate people were hastily created. According to official data, as of October 8, 1999, there were about 112 thousand Chechen refugees in Ingushetia, 711.5 thousand in Dagestan, a small number of Russian-speaking refugees found shelter in the Stavropol Territory. Chechnya itself was frankly preparing

for a big war. According to official federal sources, fortifications were erected along the Terek and along the Tersky Ridge, for the equipment of which the militants forcibly recruited the local population. Armed detachments gathered in Grozny from all over the republic. Mobile sabotage terrorist groups were intensively prepared, to equip which vehicles were confiscated from the population.

The federal command continued to carry out air strikes and conduct reconnaissance on Chechen territory. On October 12, Russian troops occupied the last, 39th in a row, Shelkovskaya village, located on the left bank of the Terek. The militants switched to active

defense tactics, or rather, guerrilla warfare. Acting in groups of 5-6 people, they began to make surprise attacks on the troops, and then retreat to pre-prepared positions. During the retreat, roads and separate sections of the terrain were mined, and ambushes were set up along the routes of advance of the federal troops. But those mosquito bites couldn't stop the power of fire and metal.



Every flight is a feat

The actions of the federal troops were actively commented on by their command and the Russian press. So, on October 13, General Viktor Kazantsev announced that the immediate plan provided for the liberation of three districts from militants: Shelkovsky, Naursky and Nadterechny. On October 14, information about the actions of federal forces on the right bank of the Terek "leaked" to the Russian press. Krasnaya Zvezda reported on the active resistance of the militants in the area of the settlement of Goragorsk, located south of the Nadterechny Canal. Two days later, there was a message about the encirclement of up to 300 militants in this settlement.

On October 12, 1999, one of the parachute regiments of the 76th Airborne Division (Vostok group) concentrated in an area 20 km north of Gudermes. There he received the task from the morning of October 15 to block Gudermes from the southeast, south and southwest. In the future, the units of the regiment were supposed to ensure the "cleansing" of the city by internal troops. At the same time, the 1st paratrooper battalion was supposed to operate in a decisive direction and, in addition to capturing the dominant heights, ensure blocking

highways Gudermes - Grozny, Belorechie - Gudermes and the railway
Gudermes - Grozny.



Alertness of the Chechen side

In Gudermes, the positions of the militants were equipped as early as 1994-1996 and were strongholds with trenches, communication channels and shelters. According to intelligence data, there were up to 800 militants in the city, who, in addition to small arms and heavy machine guns, had two 120-mm mortars and three 82-mm mortars, as well as grenade launchers. Taking into account the fact that many civilians remained in the settlement, the task of capturing it was not an easy one. There was only one hope that, having achieved surprise, it would be possible to preempt the militants from occupying the dominant heights. The 1st Airborne Battalion (commanded by Lieutenant Colonel O. N.

Mamot) began its combat mission at 2 am on October 15. Having advanced to the indicated area, the battalion by 12 noon, having destroyed several small groups of militants,

captured

dominant heights and established control over the area adjacent to them. But the city continued to hold out, and the militants constantly pulled up reinforcements there.

The sluggish battle continued on 16 October. One of the most serious attempts by the militants to break into the city, undertaken by them in the evening of that day, was successfully repelled. The enemy tried to recapture some of the dominant heights, but on the approaches to them, having stumbled upon minefields, he suffered losses and was forced to retreat.



Column

The battle ended at 10 am on October 17. Nobody knew the exact number of losses among the militants, but only on the outskirts of the height, for which the most fierce battles were fought, 16 corpses were found. The 1st Airborne Battalion itself in this battle lost one man killed and two wounded. The task was successfully completed, the work of the units of the internal troops began. By the twentieth of October 1999, the official media reported that the federal troops in

Shelkovsky, Naursky and Nadterechny districts have already blocked 23 settlements. As a result, the appearance was created that the events in Chechnya were developing according to the Kremlin's scenario.

In practice, however, this was not the case. It was still very far from establishing full control over the occupied territory. According to some sources, sabotage and reconnaissance groups of militants were active at that time in the Shelkovsky, Naursky and Nadterechny districts. Several terrorist acts were carried out, as a result of which more than 120 people died in just a few days. In the village of Ramenskaya, more than 40 people were shot in one day. The note left by the militants stated that all the dead were punished for assisting the federal authorities. Moreover, this punitive action was carried out just a few hours after the village was "cleansed" by Russian troops. Soon after the negotiations, Shamil Labazanov and the elders accompanying him were shot in an ambush, who agreed with the federal command on the peaceful surrender of the village of Ishcherskaya. Finally, the Kremlin began to understand that no half-hearted measures would be able to pacify the rebellious Chechnya. It was necessary to act more resolutely and

more rigidly. And it was necessary to start from the "head", that is, from the Chechen capital and the supreme power. By that time, Russian troops had already crossed the Terek in many directions, and on the main one they had reached the approaches to the Chechen capital.

Again this terrible

Extremely incomprehensible to the Russian people in this war, as in the last one, was the role of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, who was obliged to approve all the most important strategic decisions. But B. N. Yeltsin seems to deliberately evade this duty, choosing for himself the role of an observer from the outside. Rare cases of his intervention in the Caucasian events were either punitive (change of prime ministers) or demagogic. As a result, the opinion has become entrenched in society that the generals are fighting on their own, without the leadership of the Center, and therefore without a clear operational plan. In the Chechen wars, politics has always suppressed the art of war, which was nothing more than a pawn in the complex game of the

Kremlin politicians "for the sake of it." Several years have passed since December 1994, and now the war is back, and Russian troops are stationed 15-20 km from Grozny, all these years the nest of Chechen separatists and the main focus of tension on the southern borders of the Russian Federation. It would seem that no healthy organism would endure

such a purulent wound. And in the fall of 1999, everything was not easy. The next parliamentary elections were approaching, and presidential elections were not far off. The game was played in a big way, as a stake was a huge country with its rich natural resources, the sale of which promised fabulous profits. And there were a lot of people in the world who wanted to buy Russian raw materials. A correct move was needed, as a result of which it was possible to form a political situation that significantly went beyond the borders of Chechnya. For the Yeltsin entourage, which had long since begun to lose the trust of the people, it was necessary at all costs to correct the situation.

To work out a rational solution, on October 20, "siloviki" and several people from B. N. Yeltsin's inner circle were gathered at the president's dacha. There was no Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin, who at that time left the capital for the Krasnodar Territory to study the situation on the spot.

In Moscow, the question of storming Grozny was being decided. According to a source like the Segodnya newspaper, the head of the presidential administration Alexander Voloshin and "some generals" insisted on an immediate assault. But it is difficult to say how such an operation could have been planned without a preliminary report from the Chief of the General Staff. Despite this, the decision to storm Grozny was made by a majority vote.



Exploration is always ahead

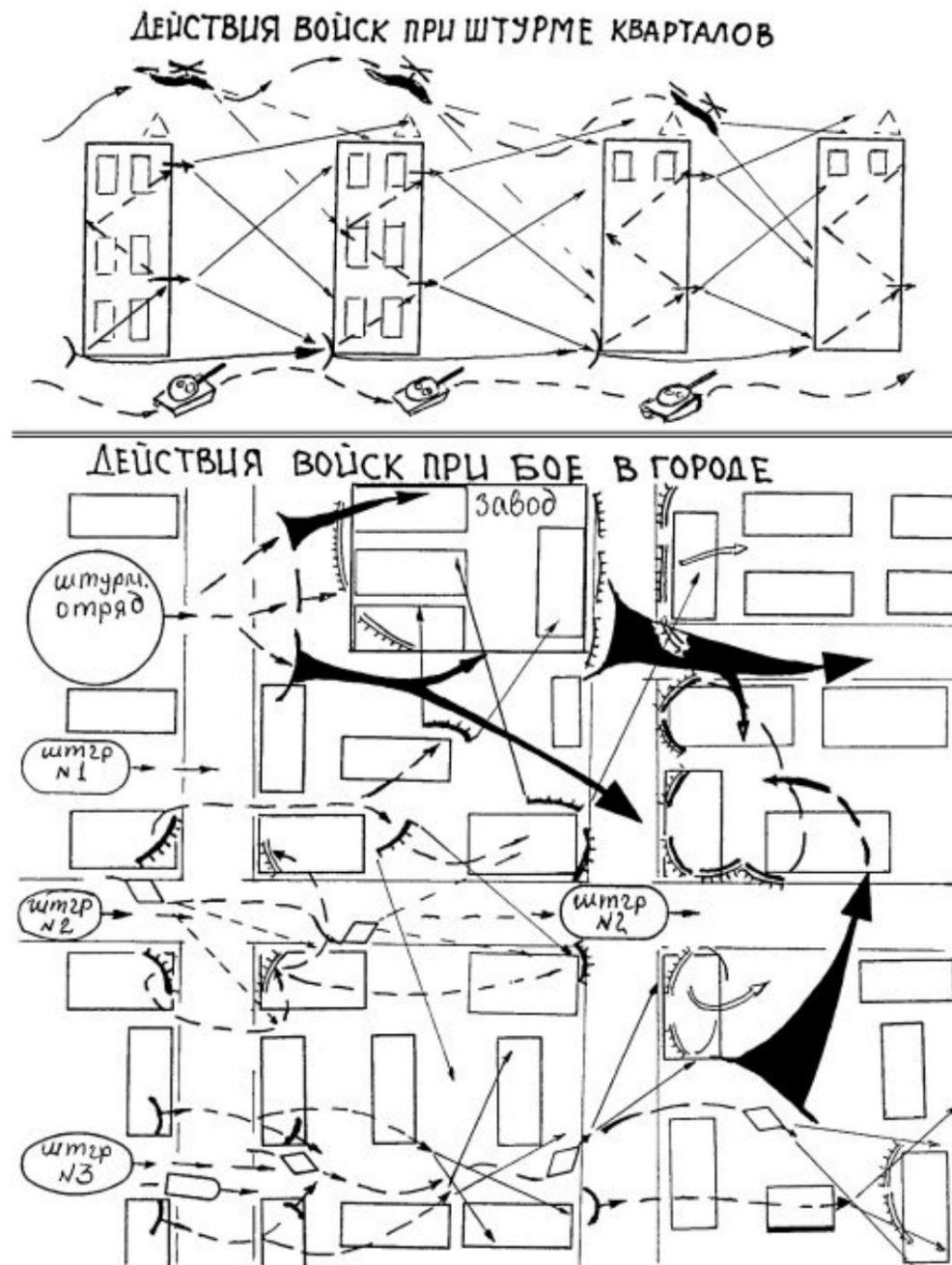
But the war was waged throughout Chechnya. In operational reports, the names of settlements familiar from the last Chechen war flashed every now and then. So, the Russians often heard the well-known name of the settlement - Bamut. For this settlement, the federals fought bloody battles in 1995 and 1996. Then it was said that this place is very advantageous for defense and difficult for attack. Mountainous terrain, stone buildings, and to top it off - missile silos of the former division of the Strategic Missile Forces of the USSR, which were skillfully used by militants. Underground passages from these mines were dug to the houses, as a result of which an entire underground city was formed, practically invulnerable to federal artillery and aviation.

Apparently, all the previous assaults on Bamut did not teach the federal command anything. The city was not blocked from all sides. Federal artillery in the daytime methodically fired at Bamut, destroying its ground structures. But the night was falling, and dozens of vehicles with human reinforcements and materiel rushed to this city from Achkha-Martan through gaps in the combat formations of the federal troops. The next day I had to start

all over again...

Fighting in Chechnya was stubborn. No one counted the losses among the militants and the Chechen civilian population, but they talked about many hundreds of dead and wounded. The losses of the Russian troops were also significant, but they tried to announce them infrequently and deliberately reduced them. Thus, the newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda reported on October 22, 1999 that during the fighting in the North Caucasus from August 2 to October 21, the armed forces lost only 196 people killed and 500 wounded. In reality, there were much more of them. The intensity of the fighting during this period can be evidenced

by the number of awards issued to Russian soldiers. According to the head of the personnel department of the North Caucasian Military District, General S. Kucheryavy, only for the period from October 1 to October 19, 346 military personnel of the Ministry of Defense were presented for state awards. Including the Order of Courage - 94, the Order "For Military Merit" - 17, the medal "For Merit to the Fatherland" 2nd degree - 21, the medal "For Courage" - 73 people. If we take into account that every hundredth person was presented for the award, and approximately 40% of the orders and medals were awarded to the dead soldiers, a completely different arithmetic turns out.



The Chechens themselves also sought to inflame the atmosphere as much as possible and show the true face of the Kremlin to the whole world. On October 21, an explosion occurred in the Central Market of Grozny, the cause of which the Chechen leadership called the hit of a Russian ground-to-ground missile. Peaceful people died. But the Russian side stated that there was no shelling of Grozny that day. But, as you can see, it was not possible to limit ourselves to half-hearted measures.

The next day after this incident, an official statement was made by the Government of the Russian Federation "On the situation in the Chechen Republic and measures to resolve it." It noted that the first part of the military operation ended with the liberation of one third of the territory of the republic from terrorists. It was pointed out that the Government of the Russian Federation "will continue to act just as resolutely and harshly, seeking the complete restoration of law and order throughout the Chechen Republic, the liberation of Chechnya from terrorist and other bandit formations."

The offensive of the federal troops on Chechnya continued. By October 27, from the northeast, they approached Grozny at a distance of 7-10 km. The forward detachments of the paratroopers reached the outskirts of Gudermes. In the eastern direction, the village of Engel-Yurt was blocked, and the village of Zondak was taken into a semicircle. In the western direction, Sernovodsk was blocked, fighting continued on the approaches to Samashki, Achkhoy-

Martan and Bamut. The next day, according to official sources, the federal troops began a "cleansing operation" in Gudermes, which had been abandoned by the main forces of the militants at night. Most of them went to Grozny, the rest went to bases in the mountains. But, according to the statement of the federal center, cover forces remained in the city, and snipers actively "worked" in crowded places. These statements justified any military action, during which the internal troops did not stand on ceremony.

Continuing the information war, the federal authorities tried in every possible way to discredit the separatists, to show their "bestial" face and isolation from the Chechen people. In the media now and then there were reports about the expulsion of militants from their villages by the population, about the execution of civilians by the latter. Thus, Krasnaya Zvezda noted that on October 29, terrorists forcibly attracted about 300 residents to strengthen Bamut, and 10 people who showed dissatisfaction were shot. "Indignant" journalists wrote: "Bandits forcefully keep people in settlements to use as a "human shield". The next day, the same newspaper reported that "in the Khasavyurt direction, residents of the settlements of Braguny,

Azamat-Yurt and Stepnoye ousted the militants from their villages and created armed detachments to counter the extremists. The actions of the population are also supported by a part of the clergy of the Chechen Republic. In particular, Mufti Aslan Khadzhi Kadyrov, who was removed from the post of Supreme Mufti of Chechnya by A. Maskhadov, declared the Gudermes, Nozhayyurt and Kurchaloevsky regions a zone free from Wahhabism."

Thus, a powerful opposition to the regime of A. Maskhadov was born, which was destined to play a big role in the future structure of Chechnya. The ranks of this opposition were joined not only by people loyal to the federal government, but also by those who nurtured their own plans. There were many who tried to change the political "colour" solely for the sake of preserving the previously looted and receiving forgiveness for previously committed crimes. Therefore, the armed detachments of the Chechen opposition practically did not differ in any way from the detachments of militants, and yesterday's field commanders easily retrained first as commanders of local self-defense detachments, then as commanders of detachments of government troops. But there were still many irreconcilable Chechens.

The capital of the rebellious region - the city of Grozny - was preparing for defense in accordance with all the laws of military art. The city was turned into a fortified area measuring 40 by 40 km. In operational terms, he, along with the suburbs, was divided into four sectors. The eastern sector was entrusted to Shamil Basayev, the South-West - to Ruslan Galaev, the Central - to Magomed Khambiev, Staropromyslovsky - to Beslan Bakuev. We decided to take the defense seriously. On November 1, 1999, Aslan Maskhadov

signed a decree on the prosecution of persons collaborating with the federal government. With this act, he once again demonstrated Grozny's opposition to Moscow at the level of state policy that Chechnya tried to pursue. But the federal authorities, too, were determined to

discredit Maskhadov's regime in Chechnya with all their might, primarily in the country's rural areas. For the sake of this, huge consignments of material aid were sent to the previously liberated areas. The rapid restoration of houses, roads, bridges, and other objects began

infrastructure. Schools, shops, medical centers have started working in the villages. In mosques, only proven mullahs ruled the service, whose sermons were previously carefully studied by specially appointed people.

Only after that, from November 5 to November 8, 1999, units of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia carried out the first stage of a special operation, during which 19 settlements previously occupied by federal forces were "cleansed". As a result, according to federal sources, 218 people were detained on suspicion of committing crimes. Among them, 106 were accused of participating in gangs, 55 were carrying fake documents. During the operation, 150 firearms, a large amount of ammunition, previously stolen cars and cattle were seized.

At the same time, Russian aviation was actively working on the remaining unconquered territory of Chechnya. On November 13, the air group of federal forces set a kind of record by making 180 sorties. But remember that in 1991 the multinational forces in the Persian Gulf made up to a thousand sorties a day. Pinpoint strikes were inflicted not only on militants' gathering places, but also on roads, bridges, mini-factories and other important objects. The Chechens resisted all the weaker. According to the aviators

themselves, the enemy's air defense capabilities were constantly declining. If earlier they used portable anti-aircraft missile systems of the Stinger and Strela types, capable of hitting air targets at an altitude of up to 3500 m, then in October-November, anti-aircraft guns, DShK and small arms became the main means of combating Russian aviation, the probability of hitting which was only 0.03%. This ensured impunity for the actions of Russian aviation in the air. The enemy was still trying to resist, using a wide maneuver with the remaining forces and means.

Seemingly "peaceful" Chechens, who were engaged in everyday activities during the daytime, turned into warriors at nightfall and, having gathered in small detachments, advanced to pre-planned directions and suddenly struck. After completing the combat mission, they hid their weapons and went home so that the next

reunite at night. To resist such tactics was very difficult.



On the military road

Under these conditions, the federal command widely began to practice setting up ambushes on the likely routes of maneuver for militants. Subunits specially trained for this also made swift marches, unexpectedly for the enemy appeared on the route of advancing combat groups, occupied convenient firing positions and carefully camouflaged themselves. It was very difficult to identify such an ambush, and as a result of their regular arrangement in large numbers, the combat activity of the enemy was drastically reduced.

Ambushes were practiced in places favored by Chechen snipers. In general, the sniper war was conducted by militants very actively. There were cases when several snipers "worked" at the location of the unit at the same time, who constantly moved on the ground from one previously prepared shelter to another. Losses from sniper fire were very sensitive.

In order to counter the actions of Chechen snipers, some commanders of the federal troops began to practice the creation of special groups to deal with them. Representatives of these

groups in the daytime carefully studied the area, determined the places of firing positions of snipers and the approaches to them. With the onset of darkness, ambushes were set up on the approaches or directly at the firing positions. Only well-trained and seasoned fighters were assigned to these ambushes. Their task was not only to wait for the arrival of the Chechen sniper, but also to make sure that there was no cover. Only after this did the ambush forces proceed to destroy the enemy.

Ambushes were widely practiced on the enemy's retreat routes. So, having learned about the attack of militants on any object, the federal command immediately calculated the ways of their probable withdrawal after the battle. Ambushes were set up along these paths, which, as a rule, achieved their goal. Chechens after the battle usually lost their vigilance and became easier prey than in a normal situation.



After battle

When organizing such ambushes, the bet was made on the fact that the militants very rarely fought to the last man during an attack on any object. Most often, having convinced themselves of the organized resistance of the federal forces, after intensive shelling of the object, they began to retreat, hiding behind a small rearguard. While the rear guard fought, the main body made a swift march,

trying in every way to confuse the tracks. However, at the same time, they, as a rule, lost their vigilance and often fell into pre-prepared ambushes. The federal command responded to the cunning of the enemy with a counter cunning. Often, larger groups of militants

also fell into ambushes. So, on November 22, 1999, an ambush was organized between Argon and Gudermes on the proposed route of advancement of Chechen snipers by force up to a platoon. For some time she did not give results. But on November 24, a detachment of up to 30 militants unexpectedly appeared in the ambush area.

Not expecting a dirty trick, the Chechens moved without proper protection. The feds managed to wait until only 20–30 m were left to the enemy, after which they opened heavy fire to kill. Despite the suddenness, the Chechens put up strong

resistance. A fight ensued. The platoon commander turned to the battalion commander for help, and artillery fire was opened on the indicated areas, then reinforcements were sent to the battlefield, including

including one tank.



All Chechen cities as a result of the war became similar to each other.
friend

Only after that, the militants began to roll up their battle formation and retreat, carrying away the dead and wounded. After the entire ambush area was liberated, about ten enemy corpses and several weapons were found there.

On November 22, the commander of a motorized rifle regiment from the West group was given the task of capturing the settlement of Alkhan-Yurt. This was supposed to ensure the coverage of Grozny from the western direction and the connection with the Vostok group.

Intelligence established that Alkhan-Yurt was being defended by a group of militants consisting of about 150 people, armed with small arms and one 82-mm homemade mortar. This group included many mercenaries, mostly Arabs, who had combat experience gained in Afghanistan and during the First Chechen War. The militants, disregarding the opinion of the local population, set up firing positions in the mosque, in the cemetery, directly in residential buildings, as well as in household buildings. They shot the indignant and protesting elders. To the right of the settlement along the Martan River, at a front of up to 7 km, another "battalion" of illegal armed formations was defending. The positions of the defenders were set up along the eastern bank of the river, which reached a height of 7–8 m.

This allowed the defenders to conduct surveillance at great depth, timely determine the directions of the main attack and maneuver with forces and means in these directions. This was facilitated by the fact that the Martha River was a rather serious obstacle. Its width reached 15 meters, and the width of the depression itself was 50–70 meters. The entire floodplain of the river was covered with thick bushes, in which the militants set up various mine-explosive barriers.

The preparation for the battle was very thorough. Previous experience has shown that fighters often run out of ammunition during an offensive, and it is very difficult to organize their supply in battle. It was decided to equip each soldier with several additional magazines, additional boxes of ammunition were attached to each combat vehicle.



Andrey Ivanovich Nikolaev, Director of the Federal Border Service of Russia (1994–1997), General of the Army

It is noteworthy that on the eve of this offensive, an Orthodox priest arrived in the unit, who himself participated in the First Chechen War and had military awards. He held a conversation, performed several rites of baptism, handed out icons and crosses. Thus, the lack of party-political work adopted in the Soviet Army was to some extent made up for by the performance of religious rites. In order to achieve surprise, it was planned to launch

the attack at night, on the night of December 2, 1999. Artillery preparation of the attack, lasting 60 minutes, was to begin at 5 o'clock in the morning. This time was also not chosen by chance - it was at 5 o'clock that the morning prayer of Muslims began. Several attack aircraft and fire support helicopters also participated in fire training.

Motorized rifles went on the attack at 6 o'clock in the morning. Tanks moved ahead of their chains, firing at direct fire. Thanks to all these actions, it was possible to capture the bridge and several fords across the Martan River, after which the federal forces broke into the settlement.

The battalion, which ensured the success of the attack and the introduction of the second echelon of the regiment into battle, lost 12 people killed and 50 wounded in this battle. In addition, in this battle, the militants destroyed two tanks: one was hit by fire from grenade launchers, the other was blown up by a landmine. The losses of the militants amounted to 80 people killed and about 50 people wounded. Many weapons and ammunition were seized.



Pulikovsky Konstantin Borisovich, Commander of the Provisional United Forces of the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic (1994–1996), Lieutenant General

After that, the “cleansing” of the settlements that ended up in the rear of the federal forces continued. On November 17, having met almost no resistance, units of the internal troops “cleaned up” Sernovodsk and Assinovskaya, other settlements were on the agenda. The federal command reported that militants, their accomplices, weapons and ammunition were found in each of these settlements. At the same time, the findings were not presented to the general public.

At this time, the federal troops were squeezing the encirclement around Bamut more and more tightly. The settlement was already blocked from the north, west and south, and only the eastern corridors connected it with the outside world. The federal command decided that there would be no assault on the city, and that the "Bamut knot" would be cut by fire starvation. The same method provided for the capture of Grozny, where, according to intelligence, about six thousand militants were concentrated. In order to divert the forces of the

federal troops from Bamut and Grozny, the militants organized a series of ambushes and attacks in the rear of these settlements, the results of which were widely advertised.

At the same time, information was leaking out about the losses of federal forces. So, it was leaked that on the night of November 17, a group of 14 paratroopers, led by senior lieutenant Roman Igoshin, moving along the Tondo-Kharacha route, was completely destroyed. Twelve people died, two wounded soldiers

Chechens captured.



Sad pictures of war

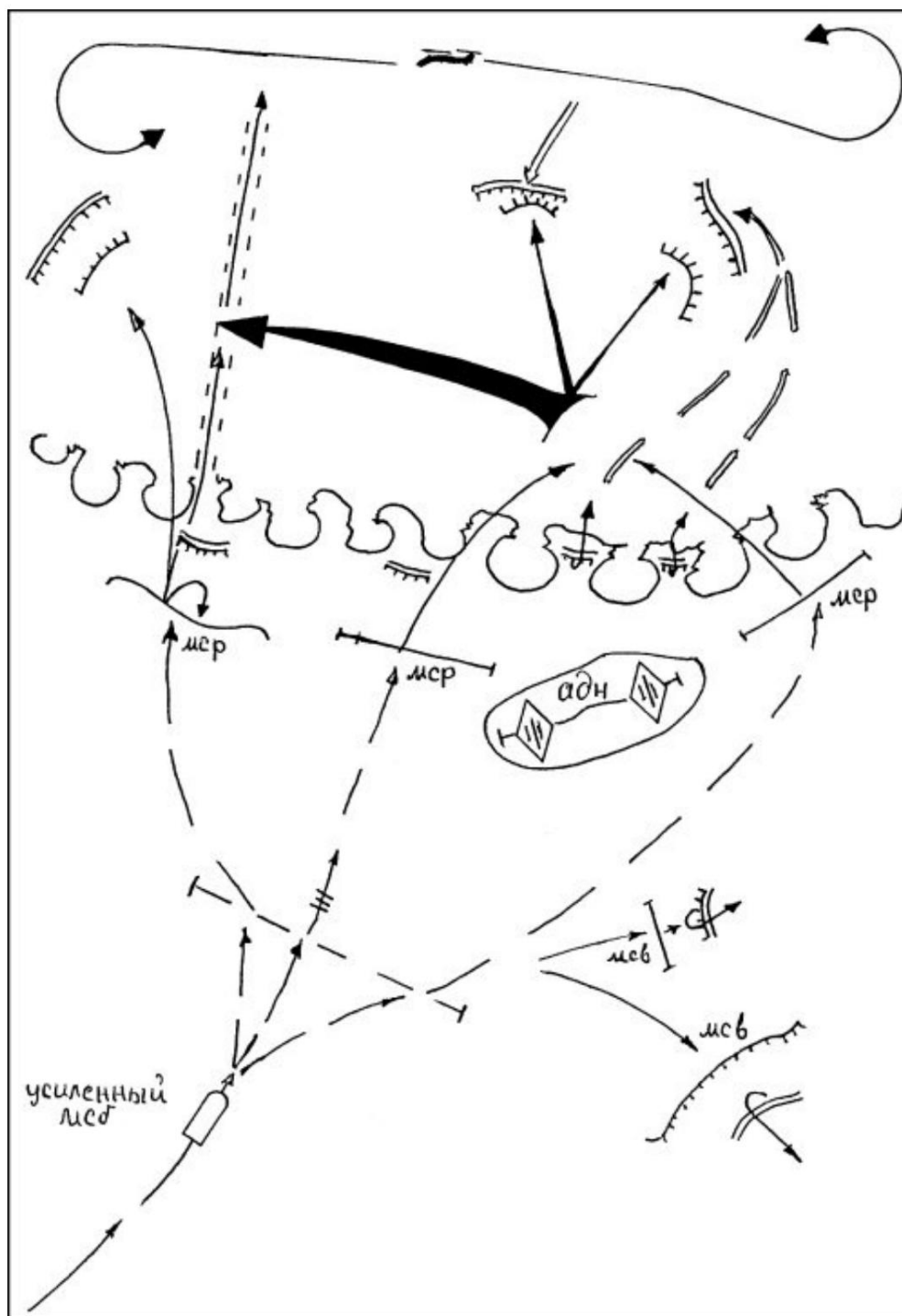
A common occurrence in any war, but this time it got a lot of publicity. The militants and the Western media made sure that what happened in the Chechen mountains became public knowledge. The very next day, Russian television showed a chilling picture of the battle that had taken place and the captured soldiers. Incredibly large numbers of losses of federal troops in that battle were called. Speech

it was about a large unit that had fallen into a Chechen ambush, although the same bodies of those killed were shown from different angles.

The federal command, as always, delayed the answer. Only on November 30 did a short article about the fight two weeks ago appear in Krasnaya Zvezda. It said that the paratroopers died, "fearlessly attacking the superior forces of the enemy." The real picture of what happened remained unknown. Subsequently, continuing the offensive from west to east, federal troops

occupied the settlements of Samashki and Achkhoy Martan, located north of Bamut. Gradually, the ring around Grozny was shrinking. Russian warplanes appeared in the air every now and then, making 70-80 sorties daily and striking at concentrations of militant forces. Quite often, civilians were also subjected to these blows, but no one lost among the latter.

considered.



At the same time, the federal authorities were actively looking for allies among the Chechen leaders. At the same time, it looked like the federal leadership was ready to cooperate even with yesterday's bandits and criminals, as long as they approved their actions in Chechnya. So, in the 20s, all Russian media reported that the former

Mayor of Grozny Beslan Gantamirov, who was imprisoned for embezzlement of funds allocated for the restoration of the Chechen capital in 1995 and 1996, was released and sent to Chechnya on behalf of the Russian leadership with great powers.

But B. Gantamirov hatched personal plans. In Chechnya, he immediately set about creating his own armed formations and extorting funds from the federal authorities and civilians by any means. Other Chechen leaders acted similarly to Gantamirov. The feds also encouraged the transition of

various Chechen armed formations to the side of the federal center. So, on November 26, 1999, the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper reported that in the Nozhai Yurtovsky district, the former Minister of Internal Affairs of Chechnya A. Abalaev, with his detachment of 150 people stationed in Zandak, expressed his readiness to take control of the area and prevent militants from entering there. In reality, it was nothing more than a redistribution of local power.

At the end of November 1999, the federal command announced the completion of the second phase of the operation. At the same time, it was said that in more than three months of hostilities in Dagestan and Chechnya, army aviation made more than nine thousand sorties, during which only one aircraft was shot down by anti-aircraft weapons of militants, and two others were destroyed on the ground. Nothing was specifically said about the losses of the militants themselves. The impression was that the Russian Federation was at war with a mythical enemy with some incomprehensible goals. A significant part of the Russian people adhered to the same opinion. Everyone, including the government, is clearly tired of the war.

Playing "win" and "lose"

The feds needed a resounding victory, the Chechens were also not going to admit defeat. Each was right in his own way, each led his own line. But in Moscow at that time, preparations were made for more significant events, the content of which was privy to only a select few. By the end of November, as

part of the third stage of the operation, the federal troops, having stepped up hostilities, reached the crossroads of the Grozny-Vedeno and Baku-Rostov roads. Heavy fighting unfolded on the eastern approaches to Argun, near the villages of Alleroy, Novogroznenskoye, Gordali, Alkhan-Yurt, Tsentoroy, Dzhalka, the village of Masker-Yurt was blocked. The capture of Argun and Urus-Martan was on the agenda. But all these victories did not yet ensure the desired defeat of the enemy. Other measures were also

needed. In early December 1999, the State Duma of Russia in the first reading adopted the Law on amnesty "in respect of persons involved in illegal acts related to the armed conflict" in Chechnya. And although the amnesty had a fairly long period, there were very few militants who wanted to take advantage of it. It became clear that no concessions could persuade the Chechens to stop resisting.



Life goes on...

Then a bet was made on raising the authority of the Russian troops. B. N. Yeltsin signed a decree conferring the title "Hero of Russia" to the commander of the joint group of federal forces, General V. Kazantsev, and the commander of troops in the directions, Generals G. Troshev and V. Shamanov. I remember that at the end of the First Chechen War, P. Grachev represented to the same high rank the commander of the grouping of federal troops A. Kvashnin, his chief of staff L. Shevtsov, the commander of the troops of the L. Rokhlin direction, but then all these generals refused the Stars of the Hero, motivating this is because it is unworthy to receive such a high reward for a war with one's own people and on one's own territory. This time, the military leaders did not refuse the awards. A generous stream of orders fell on other participants in the hostilities. Finally, the president made a policy

statement on the future plans of action for the federal troops in Chechnya. He declared:

"As the President of the Russian Federation, I responsibly declare that the second stage of the counter-terrorist operation in the North Caucasus has been completed and completed successfully. The assigned tasks have been completed. We

are moving on to the third stage." Formulating the further tasks of the third stage of the operation, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief pointed out only two points. First, that "the military part of the operation will continue in proportion to the situation and the task of eradicating terrorism in the North Caucasus." Secondly, he announced his decision to deploy after the victory on the territory of the Chechen Republic of the combined arms formation of

the Russian Armed Forces on a permanent basis. The third component of the presidential statement was a reminder of the amnesty for Chechen fighters. At the same time, the course of the amnesty itself was not disclosed in figures. It was only stated that it was going well in certain regions of Chechnya and that some

detachments of militants and individuals had already laid down their arms. It was the first official statement by the President of Russia since August 2, when Chechen fighters invaded Dagestan. It took four months of war and a series of victories for the Supreme Commander to at least somehow finally declare his

involvement in what is happening in the North Caucasus. After that, military operations began to be carried out more decisively. In the period from December 6 to December 13, 1999, federal troops under the leadership of Major General V. Shamanov seized the settlement of Alkhan-Kala.

This was preceded by reconnaissance, which established that an enemy grouping was located in Alkhan-Kala, and the approaches to the settlement were well fortified with various engineering structures and minefields. The offensive was decided to be carried out in two stages. On the first, capture the settlement of Yermolovskoye and several command heights on the northern outskirts of Alkhan-Kala, on the second, capture the indicated settlement. After that, the troops were supposed to carry out a "cleansing" of Alkhan-Kala and go to the Zavodskoy

district of Grozny. The main burden in solving this combat mission fell on the shoulders of the most trained 1st motorized rifle battalion, commanded by Major A.S. Shpangel. He was given

artillery battalion and sapper company. In addition, another battalion was supposed to carry out a diversionary strike, thus pulling back part of the enemy forces. The attack was to begin at 21:00 on December 7, 1999.

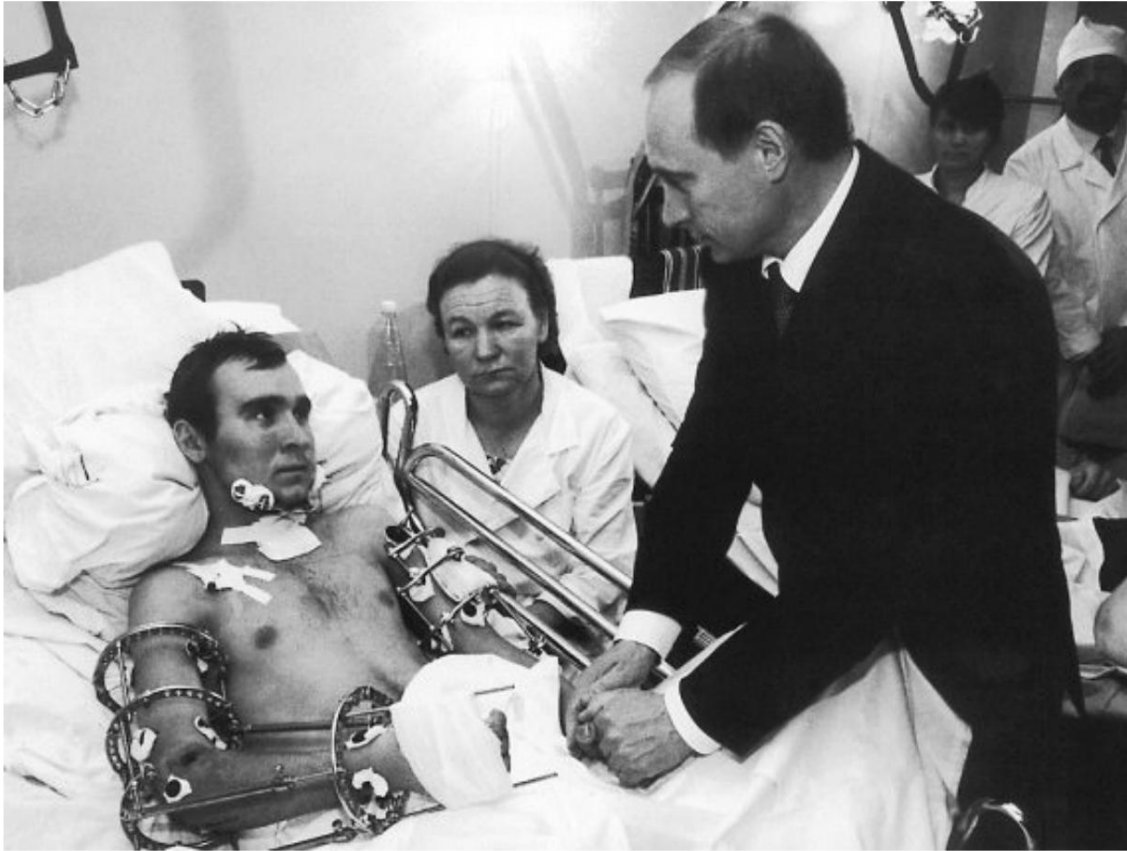
At the appointed time, the artillery conducted a short 10-minute artillery preparation in the Yermolovsky area. Using its results, the military tactical groups of the 1st battalion broke through the positions of the militants and by 22 o'clock captured the settlement of Yermolovsky and the command heights around it. At the same time, federal troops lost four people wounded. The losses of the militants amounted to 19 people killed and wounded, an 82-mm mortar, a sniper rifle, 10 machine guns and a machine gun with ammunition were captured, as well as a radio station, documents, an area defense plan, and frequency tables. Subsequently, the

sappers were engaged in the construction of passages in the minefields discovered to the west of Alkhan-Kala. At the same time, reconnaissance of the enemy was constantly carried out with all available means. At night, specially trained combat groups were sent to the way of the militants' maneuver. Every day, in the rear of the battalion, training was carried out to storm the settlement. At 10 a.m. on

December 12, the battalion commander reported to the regiment commander that he was ready to carry out the next combat mission. After a thorough check of the preparation, the unit launched an attack on Alkhan-Kala at 23.30. By the morning of December 13, the settlement was already in the hands of the federals.

The offensive developed in other directions as well. On the evening of December 10, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel A. I. Morozov, received the task of capturing the settlement of Khankala. The whole next day, work was carried out to prepare for hostilities. Each platoon was divided into two groups: assault and support. The training was carried out on a terrain similar to the area of the upcoming hostilities. The offensive was scheduled for 21:30 on December 11.

The complexity of this operation was that the approaches to the settlement were impassable for military equipment, and artillery was strictly forbidden to fire on residential buildings. We had to advance on foot, relying on the strength of small arms fire.



By the bed of the wounded

This did not stop the division. Having launched an offensive, the battalion reached the approaches to Khankala by 22 o'clock, and at 23 o'clock attacked this settlement. The militants offered no resistance, and by morning most of Khankala was in the hands of the federals.

But a fierce battle broke out in one of the directions. A detachment of militants numbering up to 40 people was found there. Reinforcements were sent to fire. Together, the federal units at 7 o'clock in the morning attacked the enemy from the front and from the rear. Two hours later, the resistance of the Chechens was broken, and the remnants of their detachment began to hastily retreat towards the forest. Pursuing them in a densely populated area was useless.

In order to isolate the area of operations of the federal troops in Chechnya from the bases located on the territory of Georgia, and to strengthen the protection of the border of the Russian Federation from this direction, on December 17, 1999, a tactical airborne landing was carried out in the Itum-Kale region as part of a reinforced air assault

battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel V. N. Nepov. The landing of this landing force was preceded by the infliction of fire strikes by combat helicopters on the designated area and its preliminary reconnaissance from the air. The calculation was made on

surprise. The landing was successful. After landing on the landing sites, the personnel of the units immediately advanced to the areas indicated by them, where they began to equip platoon strongholds, which were located mainly at commanding heights. A few hours after the landing, a large section of the territory was under the control of federal forces. At the same time, the objects and forces of the militants who were in the area of control and on the routes of advance were destroyed.



Kazantsev Viktor Germanovich, Commander of the North Caucasian Military District (1997–2000), General of the Army

Simultaneously with the equipment of the strongholds, small groups of paratroopers were sent to the probable enemy movement routes to set up ambushes. This measure proved to be justified. The militants feverishly pulled fresh forces into the threatened area and evacuated the wounded and property from it. Several of these "caravans" were ambushed and fired upon by paratroopers.

After establishing control over the area, a thorough survey of the area was carried out. In one of the gorges was found

a large base of militants, which had large stocks of weapons, food, medicines and several pieces of equipment. In the same place, a large number of documents were found on the supply of goods, weapons, ammunition and other property to Chechnya through the territory of Georgia. On

December 20, in order to organize the border service, units of border guards began to arrive in the area controlled by the paratroopers. Over the next month, three border outposts were organized in this area, which blocked the main routes of communication between the militants and the adjacent territory.

By the end of 1999, the entire territory of Chechnya, occupied by Russian troops and including four districts: Naursky, Nadterechny, Shelkovskoy and Gudermes, was called a "security zone" and subordinated to the military commandant, Lieutenant General Ivan Babichev. In other areas, militants were still in charge, presenting themselves to the local population as real republican authorities and champions of the true faith. The support of their people was too great. Grozny's authority in Chechnya was unshakable. At

that time, the federal leadership came up with the idea of isolating the main forces of the Chechens and their leadership in Grozny not only by blockading the city with troops, artillery fire and air strikes, but also politically. To this end, work began on the issue of transferring the capital of the republic from Grozny to Gudermes, the second largest city in Chechnya. One of the arguments was that Gudermes is almost not destroyed, while Grozny is in ruins. Power in Gudermes and the Gudermes region was transferred to the commandant of the region, Major General Alexander Stolyarov. Malika Gizilieva, a former director of the local school, was appointed head of the local administration before the elections. From the very beginning it was clear that this action was only temporary. Meanwhile, the organized

resistance of the Chechens noticeably weakened with the onset of winter. On December 5, the federal command announced the occupation of Argun by Russian troops, which the militants left without a fight. At the same time, the Russian side put forward an ultimatum to the Chechens on the surrender of Grozny until December 11th. Leaflets scattered over the Chechen capital stated: "You

surrounded. Further resistance is pointless. Persons remaining in the city will be considered terrorists and destroyed.”

The Chechens were in no hurry to capitulate. In Grozny, about four thousand militants under the command of Khattab prepared for defense. A. Maskhadov left the city and moved his residence to Shali. He was followed by Sh. Basaev, who moved to Vedenov.

The circle of the blockade of Grozny was constantly narrowing, the front of encirclement of the Chechen capital was constantly expanding. On December 8, the federal command announced that Urus-Martan was occupied by troops. The fighting in the streets of this city lasted all day. Surrounded militants stubbornly resisted, but the

forces were too unequal. The next day, the feds announced that Shali had "fallen". But, as it turned out, the last statement was premature, based on the assurance of one of the local residents that the population itself expelled the militants from the village. This is what I wanted to believe...



We will return...

But the separatists were in no hurry to leave such a favorable operational point and continued to resist. Then the federal command decided to take a bold step - for the first time since the beginning of this war, an airborne assault was landed at night in the eastern part of the Shali region with a strength of up to a battalion, which occupied the intersection of roads leading to Grozny and Shatoi, as well as two bridges across the Argun River. Paratrooper

fought for several hours, but could not develop success. They limited themselves to blockade the city from three sides, leaving a corridor to the south. The militants, of course, took advantage of this opportunity. A few days later Shali was taken by federal forces without a fight. And this time it was again announced that the local residents allegedly drove out the militants themselves, who freely went into the mountains through the corridor kindly provided to them. By December 15, federal troops came close to

Grozny and even occupied its eastern outskirts. The next night, their advance detachment tried to break through to the center of the Chechen capital, but was stopped by anti-tank fire. A slow "crawling" of troops into the city began. Having met resistance, the federals stopped or even returned to their original positions, and aviation and artillery took over. Then the attack resumed. Together with Russian soldiers, Beslan Gantamirov's Chechen militias also took part in the assault on Grozny. Yermolov's principle worked - to force the Chechens to fight each other. But the Chechens fought clearly reluctantly. Time passed, day after day, week after week. So a month passed... The end of 1999 was significant for Russia. On December 31, President B. N. Yeltsin voluntarily resigned, handing over power to V. V.

Putin. A feverish political fuss began at all levels of the federal government, the wave of which reached Chechnya. For some time in Moscow, where the supreme power was divided, they "forgot" about the rebellious southern republic. But the media obediently carried out the received order. In the daily statements of the federal leadership, one could hear the words that the

situation in the regions of Chechnya liberated from militants was gradually returning to normal. It was said that the local population "was glad for the arrival of Russian troops and the expulsion of militants." On the occasion of the New Year, the Muslim holiday of Ramadan and the Nativity of Christ, a semi-official truce was announced by the Russian authorities on the Chechen front. A new act of political games began, which cost the country so dearly in 1995 and 1996.

But, as it turned out, the command of the federal troops, who were in Chechnya, was very far from understanding what was happening in the Kremlin. Thrown into the abyss of armed confrontation, they had to either comply with the laws and rules of war, or die, endangering thousands of their subordinates. The offensive could be stopped as a whole, but private battles could not be ruled out.

As early as December 29, units of one of the brigades of the internal troops, advancing through the Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny to the city center, were stopped by intense fire from militants. To ensure the further offensive of these forces, the motorized rifle battalion of Lieutenant Colonel A. N. Ignatenko was urgently brought up to the combat area. The joint actions of these units were scheduled for the morning of December 30th.

The situation as a whole was not clear enough. The federal command did not know either the forces of the militants or their defense system. To obtain additional information, on the night of December 30, intelligence was sent ahead, which was able to advance to the stadium and even gain a foothold at some key

points. But these efforts were in vain. On the morning of December 30, the battalion commander received a new combat mission - to capture the territory of the plant in the Katoyama region, which the militants had equipped in advance as a stronghold. The plant's facilities were carefully prepared for defense in engineering terms. Huge basements and underground communications allowed the militants to covertly move around the territory of the entire plant. The fire system was multi-tiered, every square meter of open area carefully shot. On the northern outskirts of the plant there was a stationary bomb shelter built back in Soviet times. The defense of the plant was carried out by a detachment of up to 50 militants. Attacking such a stronghold was not easy.



Decision making during combat

The federal command decided to launch an assault only after a thorough fire treatment of enemy positions with direct fire from howitzers and tanks. Then assault groups were thrown into the offensive, which were accompanied by fire weapons. Thanks to such careful preparation of the battle, by 13 o'clock on December 30, the territory of the plant was captured. The militants withdrew without putting up serious resistance.

After taking possession of the plant, the troops continued to move towards the city center. By evening, having suffered serious losses, they reached the area of Tashkala Square, where they were stopped by enemy fire. And again, motorized riflemen were sent to help the battalion of internal troops operating on the left flank. The situation there was becoming very difficult, and it was decided to replace the most affected battalion of internal troops with an army unit. A powerful tactical combat group was created at its base, reinforced with tanks, artillery, an engineering unit and an anti-aircraft platoon. The leadership of this group was taken over by the deputy commander of the brigade, Lieutenant Colonel S. N. Stvolov. The defense of

the militants relied on engineering structures equipped in the basements and ruins of buildings. The firing positions were arranged in such a way that they blocked all the main approaches to the defense areas. Firing points were arranged at all levels, up to the roofs and attics of buildings. The surrounding area was visible only along the streets at a distance of no more than 300 m. As usual, there was no exact information about the presence of forces and means

of the militants. Nevertheless, the task was to continue the offensive. The combat tactical group was divided into smaller ones, all fire weapons were divided into groups, interaction was organized between the groups. On the morning

of January 1, there was a change of troops. It took place under enemy fire. The replacement commanders did their best to introduce the commanders of motorized rifle subunits into the current situation, but they themselves knew it very little.

On January 2, a special detachment arrived in the area of hostilities, which was supposed to clean up the liberated territories. But these territories were still in the hands of the enemy, who constantly fired at the positions of the federal troops. Their leadership was clearly in a hurry. On the evening of January 2, the battalion was

given the task of going on the offensive at 12 noon on January 3 and by the end of the day to reach the intersection of Boroin and Zaveta Ilyich streets. The main task was assigned to the 2nd motorized rifle company, which, with the support of other units, was to capture three five-story buildings

along 8th Line Street, and then take possession of two more buildings on the south side of Zavety Ilyich

Street. The offensive of the federal troops began with powerful fire support from tanks and artillery. Enemy resistance quickly weakened, but the firefight continued. Motorized riflemen took one floor after another, one building was followed by the next. By the end of the day, the combat mission was completed. The battalion lost one man killed and three wounded. On January 4, the

battle continued. The militants used every building, every shelter for defense purposes. At the same time, they frankly evaded a decisive battle and fired mainly from ambushes and from a great distance. It was very difficult to act in such conditions, to plan a battle with an invisible enemy. The battalion regrouped its forces, creating mobile

reserves and additional fire groups. The special forces units that joined the battle planned a maneuver to the flank of the enemy, their snipers entered into confrontation with the snipers of the militants. However, it was not possible to strengthen enemy reconnaissance. I had to act almost blindly.

On the evening of January 4, the task was received from the commander of the grouping by the end of January 6, advancing along the street on the 6th of January, to seize the line of intersections with Derzhavin Street. But to accomplish this task, it was first necessary to gain a foothold in the captured area and reconnoiter the enemy.

But intelligence once again ran into an ambush. Having lost one man killed and two wounded, the scouts began to retreat to their original position. Lieutenant Alexander Belousov remained to cover their withdrawal. Being seriously wounded and having shot all the cartridges, he decided to blow himself up with a grenade along with the militants. But a Chechen bullet ended the young officer's life before he could fulfill his intention. Later, his comrades found him with a grenade in his hand, and the fuse of the grenade was damaged by an enemy bullet. The

offensive of the battalion was very difficult. There were heavy casualties among the personnel. The enemy not only conducted aimed fire from their positions, but also counterattacked. The advance was negligible, and the losses amounted to 9 people killed and 17 wounded, one tank was knocked out.



On January 6, the opponents continued to actively fire at the positions of the federal troops with mortars from handcraft rocket launchers. The “work” of enemy snipers intensified along the entire front line. According to local residents miraculously escaping, a large detachment of reinforcements arrived at night to help the militants. One of the field commanders even sent an envoy with a warning that if the federal forces continued to advance in this direction, all the local residents who were held hostage by him would be destroyed. The parliamentarian was told that if the militants did not surrender, they would all be destroyed, since it was decided not to take prisoners. The battle was entering an uncompromising phase.

To continue the offensive, the combat tactical group was reinforced with another motorized rifle company. Another regrouping of forces was carried out. On the night of January 7, special forces moved forward. One of them managed to get into the house, which was in close proximity to the militants, and start adjusting the artillery fire. However, to launch an offensive on this day

was not possible. Losses of federal troops on January 3 in this area amounted to 3 people killed and 4 wounded.

On January 8, by conducting false radio talks, they managed to mislead the militants about the main attack that was being prepared. The Chechens hastily concentrated their main forces in the threatened direction. A powerful fire strike was dealt to this place, and the offensive began in a completely different place. The troops advancing there, under the cover of tanks, managed to capture the high-rise buildings on the south side of Zavety Ilyich Street without losses. Other units also went on the offensive.

The militants began to retreat to the city center, leaving small groups of cover in the rearguard. In the following days, in the defense of the Staropromyslovyy district, the enemy no longer offered such fierce resistance.

In general, at the beginning of January 2000, there was a temporary lull on the Chechen front. The Chechens skillfully used the "generous" respite provided to them for their own purposes. There was no question of any humanism and mutual agreements, and it soon became clear that the Kremlin was needlessly flattering itself with illusions and needlessly risking the lives of thousands of Russian guys. Important officials still sat at the tables in the high Kremlin offices, who looked at the war in Chechnya as their own business, and there were many forces abroad that were directly interested in continuing the massacre in the North Caucasus.



At the grave of a comrade

On Christmas Day, large detachments of militants numbering 300 and 500 people suddenly attacked units of federal forces in the "peaceful" cities of Gudermes, Argun and Shali, located deep in the rear of the officially designated line of contact between the parties. In addition to Grozny, fighting continued in the foothills of Chechnya.

Finally, in the twentieth of December, Russian border guards somehow managed to block the border in the Chechen sector with Georgia in the Argun Gorge. Until that time, Georgia had faithfully served the militants as a reserve area for the formation and supply of their detachments. But even after the operation in the Argun Gorge, there was no need to talk about a permanent closure of the border: the militants continued to hold the Duba-Yurt area, which blocked the entrance to the Argun Gorge. The fighting at the "Wolf Gate" in the Argun Gorge continued for several months. Having passed from Alkhazurovo and Chiri-Yurt, the Russian infantry saddled the heights with difficulty. The militants entrenched themselves on the inner rocks

gorges inaccessible to artillery and aviation, from where, having gathered their strength, the federals repeatedly suddenly counterattacked at one or another height. At

the end of January 2000, Chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin and Interior Minister Vladimir Rushailo again flew to the theater of operations. The latter brought with him a new commander-in-chief of the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Colonel-General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, well known from the First Chechen War. For the arrival of high Russian officials, the front command prepared a "gift" - a report on the complete liberation from the militants of the Vedenno region. Solving this problem, units under the command of Major General Alexander Otrakovsky took control of the Harami passes and the Andean Gates, after which they reached the heights dominating the settlements of Dzhanej-Vedenno, Dyshne Vedenno, Oktyabrsky and Dargo with a throw of 35-40

km. During this visit, A. Kvashnin, having gathered journalists in Urus Martan, informed them about the successful development of the operation. According to him, it turned out that Shatoisky, Nozhai-Yurtovsky and Vedensky districts were under the complete control of Russian troops, and Itum-Kalinsky more than half. Thus, the external border, through which the militants previously received reinforcements, is securely blocked, and their pockets of resistance from the five mountainous regions of Chechnya have survived only in the Shatoisky and part of the Itum-Kalinsky regions, in the area between Vedenno and Sarzhen-Yurt

Since that time, the Argun Gorge, especially its southern part, called the "Wolf Gates", has become the main center of resistance of the militants. According to the federals, the "Wolf Gate" was defended by a detachment of Emir Rizvan Chitigov numbering more than five thousand people. The defense was so tough that in the first month of fighting the advancing troops could only advance to the southern outskirts of the Laha-Varanda settlement. In the rear of the federals, Duba-Yurt was still an impregnable fortress, from where the attackers were constantly fired upon by the enemy. The war in Chechnya developed

according to a sluggish scenario. But the new leadership of the country needed weighty and high-profile victories that could not be provided by reports on the capture of small settlements and

tactically advantageous heights. It was necessary to put an end to the resistance of the militants in Grozny.

The fall of the Chechen capital

In early 2000, the federal authorities decided to take full control of the information coming from the Chechen war. Only two persons have been granted the right to receive official information about the events taking place there - Sergei Yastrzhembsky, Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation for Coordinating Information and Analytical Work of the Executive Authorities Taking Part in the Counter-Terrorist Operation, and Colonel-General Valery Manilov, First Deputy Chief of the General Staff. V. Manilov built his messages according to a long-established scenario

- he praised the Russian troops, scolded the Chechens and frightened the population of the republic. In particular, already in his first, now official, statement, he named the number of losses among the militants during the hostilities - only more than 10 thousand people were killed. Losses among the peaceful Chechen population and Russian troops were not called a general.

Speaking about the plans to seize Grozny, V. Manilov only assured journalists that not a single militant would leave the city uncontrollably. To this end, the advancing side allegedly creates two active fronts: the first is external, along the perimeter of the city; the second - assault, operating directly in urban areas. There was nothing new in this decision - it was well worked out during the Great Patriotic War. It is only a pity that Russian military leaders recalled some laws of military art with great late.

This statement, as well as the complexity of the situation, forced the militants to attempt an organized exit from the besieged city with impunity. The scheme of this event was simple and well worked out earlier. The Chechen command expected to buy an exit corridor from the federals, as it happened more than once before. But this time it didn't work. The federal command

showed military art, combining competent tactical actions of troops with military

cunning. According to the military, they managed to deceive and lure the militants into a previously prepared trap. Separate groups of militants, having started advancing from Grozny in a southwestern direction, also first fell into minefields, and then into fire ambushes. Leaving hundreds of dead and wounded, the Chechens nevertheless reached Qatar Yurt and Shaami-Yurt and entrenched themselves in these villages. During this exit, several field commanders were killed, and Sh. Basayev lost his foot.

The commander of a separate motorized rifle battalion, Major V.V. Sventsov, later recalled the following about how events unfolded in the area of the settlement of Shaami-Yurt.

On January 28, 2000, his unit was withdrawn from Grozny, where it was fighting, and was sent to the Staropromyslovsky district. At that time, it became known that small groups of the enemy were breaking through from Grozny to the southwest along the Sunzha River. The battalion was ordered to advance to the western outskirts of Samashki in order to become subordinate to the commander of the West group of troops.

At 5 pm on February 2, the battalion arrived in the designated area and received a combat mission with a network of outposts to block the direction in the forest southeast of Samashki and prevent the advance of bandit groups from Grozny to Katyr-Yurt. It was also reported that in the nearby village of Shaami-Yurt, part of the internal troops blocked a detachment of up to 1,500 militants. The federal command was counting on strikes from the north to force the Chechens to leave Shaami-Yurt and begin a retreat in a southerly direction. Thus, the battalion of Major V.V. Sventsov had to defend an important combat mission and prevent the militants from retreating to the mountains. To solve this problem, the battalion commander

decided to set up three outposts. In addition, a mobile combined-arms reserve was created in order to reinforce an outpost that was under attack by the enemy in time. Mines were placed in the directions most convenient for the retreat of the militants. Observers were posted at some heights, who were supposed to warn in time of the approach of the enemy. At 7 o'clock in the morning, the regiment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs made an attempt to capture

the settlement of Shaami-Yurt. The battle lasted nine hours.

The resistance of the militants was stubborn. Federal troops, advancing only 200–300 m, were stopped by hurricane oncoming fire and withdrew.



The Russians have come for a long time

On the night of February 4, artillery and army aviation attacked the militants who had settled in Shaami-Yurt. This time the Chechens could not stand it. Having gathered their forces, at 0430 hours they began to withdraw in a southerly direction. About 250 people attacked the stronghold of one platoon, but the battalion commander was on the alert. Soon a mobile reserve came to the aid of this platoon, the fire of a mortar battery was concentrated there. Attack militants finally choked on a minefield. The Chechen detachment, having lost up to 80% of its composition, rolled back to Shaami-Yurt.

At 06:30, a new separatist attack followed. This time the blow was delivered in a different place. Having penetrated the hollow, the Chechens hoped to achieve success through tactical surprise.

But this attack also failed. The motorized riflemen courageously took the blow, and soon the combined arms reserve came to their aid and a mortar battery maneuvered with fire. Having suffered losses, the enemy was again driven back to Shaami-Yurt, which became a real trap for them. At about 10 am

on February 4, General V. Shamanov, commander of the West grouping, arrived at the battalion command post. After listening to the report of the commander of this unit, he set a new task - together with the regiment of internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to seize the settlement of Shaami-Yurt and complete the defeat of the militants who had dug in there.

The attack began after air strikes and a half-hour artillery preparation, which was carried out on the strongholds and firing points of the militants. Motorized riflemen advanced, hiding behind the armor of combat vehicles, and acted in strictly defined directions. Combat helicopters were constantly in the air. Conducted visual reconnaissance. Snipers fired at the detected targets. By joint efforts, by 1 pm on February 4, Shaami Yurt was taken. The surviving militants withdrew to the north-west and surrendered to units of internal troops. In the village and on the way out of it, they lost up to 600 people killed, many were injured. Losses of federal troops were much less. So, the motorized rifle battalion of Major V.V. Sventsov did not lose a single person in this battle, and 9 people were wounded. Meanwhile, fighting in the center of Grozny was still going on. On January 23, 2000, the 3rd motorized rifle battalion of Major S. R. Bulantsev was

given the task of capturing three buildings on Minutka Square. But the resistance of the enemy in these buildings was desperate, and it was not possible to organize their reconnaissance.

The battalion commander decided to act according to the previously worked out scheme. On the basis of motorized rifle companies, assault groups were created. Each group, in turn, was divided into subgroups: light, medium and heavy. The light group made an attack, the middle group supported it with machine-gun fire, the heavy group fired from mortars and covered the rear.

According to a special plan, snipers acted, who were also brought together in a special group. They were supposed to suppress the most important targets at the command of the battalion

commander. The offensive began at 3 am on 25 January. It turned out that by that time the militants had left their forward positions without a fight and retreated into the depths of defense. The divisions of the battalion unhindered by 5 o'clock in the morning

reached the building of the Rodina cinema. However, at this stage of the operation, the disruption in the interaction of forces had a negative impact. The divisions of the battalion, moving forward relatively quickly, came under fire from their own artillery. 6 people were injured. The fire raid of our own artillery on the battle formations of the battalion had a negative impact on the morale of many fighters, the further offensive had to be suspended

and switched to the defensive. Later, the fight broke out again and did not stop all night. The enemy carried out constant counterattacks, trying to return the buildings. At dawn (prayer time), the militants reduced the intensity of their fire for a while. This made it possible to regroup forces somewhat, replenish ammunition and provide assistance to the wounded.



Grozny is taken

In the middle of the day on January 26, the militant offensive resumed. Small arms fire was combined with underbarrel grenade launchers. Constantly fired from anti-tank rocket-propelled grenades. Soon, the militants managed to take one of the battalion's companies into a semicircle, creating a threat of encirclement of the entire unit.

The battalion commander decided to withdraw the remnants of the assault group to the cinema area. But it was not easy to leave the occupied building - all the exits from it were well shot through. I had to call the artillery fire on myself. Only under the cover of artillery fire did they manage to leave the building, taking the dead and wounded with them.

And the preparations for a new offensive began again. Additional forces and means were brought to the area of Minutka Square. On the morning of January 31, encountering virtually no resistance, federal troops captured the square and traditionally raised the Russian flag over its ruins. The cleansing of the city began. And by February 6, the media announced that the whole of Grozny was under the control of federal troops. The desired big victory was won and became the first significant victory at the beginning of the rule of the country by V. V. Putin. With the capture of Grozny, the "flat" part of the Second Chechen War was declared over. It lasted almost six months and claimed the lives

of, according to official figures, almost 1,300 Russian servicemen, but in fact there were much more of them. Losses among the militants and civilians of Chechnya, no one

counted.

End of the active phase of the war

After the fall of Grozny, the main front of the war moved to the mountainous regions of Chechnya, where the advancing Russian troops were opposed not only by well-prepared enemy defenses, but also by difficult terrain. A rapid offensive into the mountains, despite the use of aviation and artillery, did not work. Meanwhile, spring was approaching, promising to cover the defenders with dense greenery and create conditions favorable for the Chechens to conduct a partisan war. From experience, it was this kind of war that was the most

complex.

In mid-February 2000, there were changes in the command structure of the United Group of Federal Forces in Chechnya. It was headed by Lieutenant-General G. N. Troshev, on whom the new Russian government made a special bet.



Ivanov Sergey Borisovich, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation (2001–2007)

Gennady Nikolaevich Troshev was born in 1947 in Grozny. After graduating from high school, he entered the Moscow Institute of Architecture, but after the death of his father, he transferred to the Kazan Tank School, from which he graduated in 1969. Then he graduated from the Military Academy of Armored Forces and the Academy of the General Staff. In Transnistria, he was a regiment commander and chief adviser to the Russian Foreign Ministry during the armed conflict between the self-proclaimed Transnistrian Republic and Moldova. After that, he commanded a division in the Western Group of Forces. In 1994, G. N. Troshev became the commander of the 42nd Army Corps, whose headquarters was in Vladikavkaz. With parts of this corps, he entered Chechnya in December 1994, in 1995 he commanded a joint group of federal troops for six months. Then the federal forces managed to drive the militants into the mountains. After that, G. N. Troshev commanded the 58th Army, created during the First Chechen War with headquarters in Vladikavkaz. In 1998 he became the first deputy commander of the North Caucasian Military District. In October 1999, he headed the Eastern Group of Federal Forces, and in January he became the first deputy commander of the Joint Group of Federal Forces in Chechnya, from February 23, 2000 - Colonel General.



Troshev Gennady Nikolaevich, Commander of the Joint Group of Federal Forces in Chechnya, Commander of the Army (1995–1998), Commander of the Joint Group of Federal Forces in the Chechen Republic (2000–2001), Colonel General

With the advent of G. N. Troshev, intense battles began for the Shatoi region and the city of Shatoi from mid-February. This regional center, located in the foothills of the Rocky Range of South Chechnya, was difficult to access for the advancing troops and convenient for defense. But the forces of the militants were already running out. On February 22, federal troops captured the dominant heights around Shatoi. On the last day of the month, Shatoi fell, but, as in all previous cases, most of the militants and all their commanders managed to leave this “completely blocked” settlement in a timely manner.

The desire to end the war victoriously before the presidential elections forced the Russian leadership to take a number of non-standard steps. In particular, in the spring of 2000, early graduations were made in a number of military educational institutions.

This was explained by "a shortage of platoon and company commanders, as well as in connection with the events in the North Caucasus." Thousands of young officers were sent to

the Caucasus. At the same time, Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov was put on the federal wanted list as a criminal. He was charged with an armed rebellion against the legitimate authorities, the organization of illegal armed groups, and an encroachment on the lives of law enforcement officers. Unofficially, a serious hunt began for him. The unwillingness of the federal authorities to talk about guerrilla

warfare on the territory of Chechnya did not at all mean its absence. The militants continued to adhere to well-established tactics. At the beginning of March 2000, a column of riot police from Sergiev Posad near Moscow was shot in Grozny. Two dozen killed, another three dozen wounded. And then quite understandable questions arose: how did the militants learn about the movement of an automobile convoy without military cover? Why was there no cover? And most importantly, how could a large ambush be prepared on the territory "fully controlled" by Russian troops with the involvement of significant enemy forces and means? And the last thing - why did the bandits also manage to escape with impunity this time after the execution of the Russian convoy? But none of these questions have been answered.

But at that time, the statements of the federal authorities were increasingly heard that the militants were fighting with the last of their strength, and their total number was gradually decreasing. The figures of the enemy forces were given up to one and a half to two thousand people, who, moreover, were already operating in scattered small detachments and without a single command. In fact, everything turned out to be completely different.

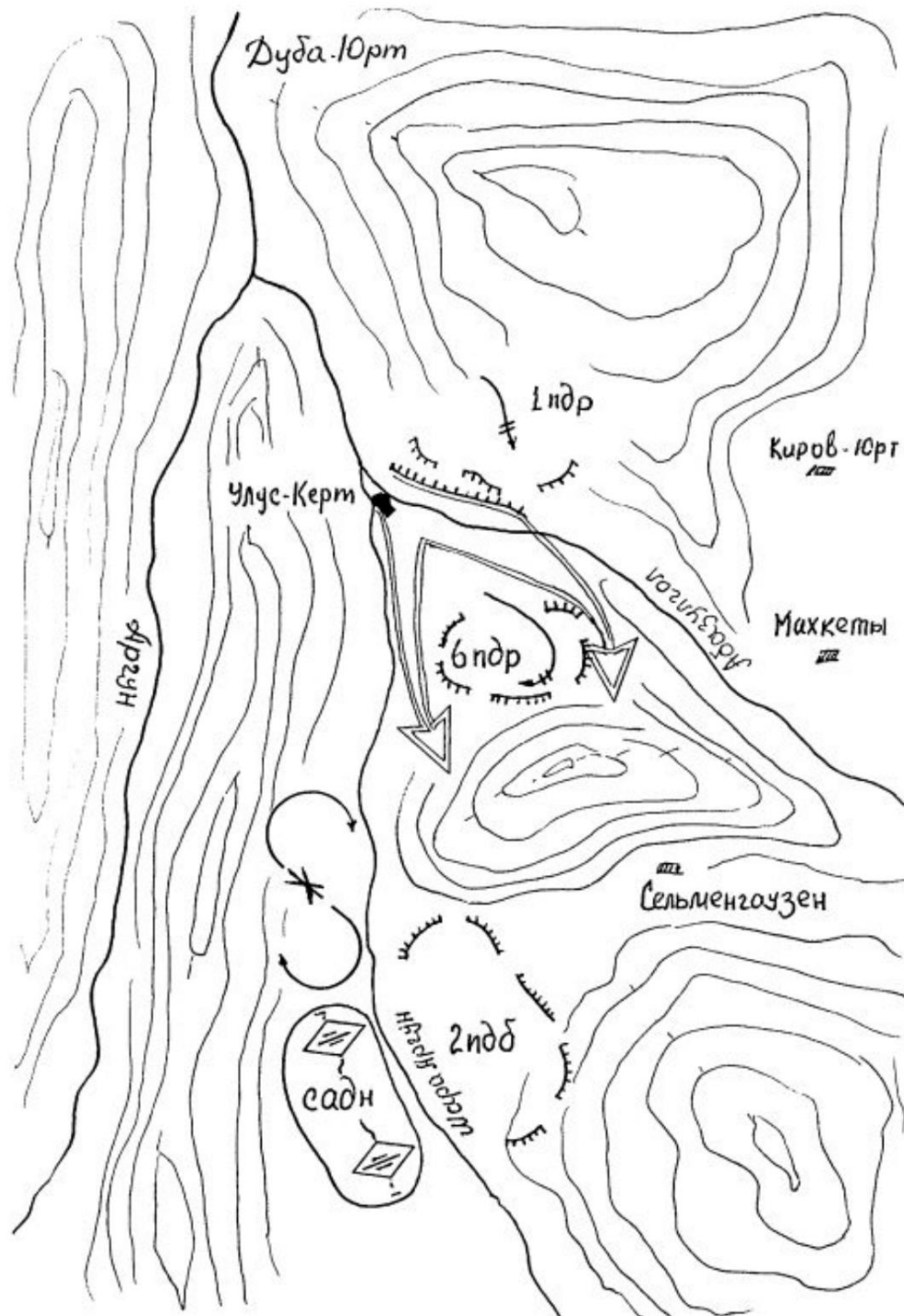


Railroad patrols

On the night of February 29 to March 1, 2000, the 6th company of the 104th Guards Airborne Regiment of the 76th Airborne Division (Pskov) suddenly came under attack from a large formation of militants in the Ulus-Kert area, located in the valley of the Abazulgol River, a tributary of the Argun. According to the Russian military, the company was blocked and attacked by a detachment of 2,500 people. The battle lasted two and a half days. During this time, out of 90 people, the paratroopers lost 84 people killed. And this massacre took place literally "in front of" the regiment, which could not come to the aid of its comrades in time. It was a pity the official excuses

sounded. "It is not true that they were abandoned," Krasnaya Zvezda wrote on March 11, 2000. - The first company of the regiment tried to break through to the encircled. But while crossing the Abazulgol River, she herself was ambushed. Pinned to the ground by a squall

machine-gun and mortar fire, the 1st company was forced to gain a foothold on the shore. More than once the paratroopers tried to break through the blockade, but the intensity of enemy fire did not decrease. Only on the morning of March 2, the 1st company was able to break into the battle area. On March 3, the bodies of 84 heroically dead paratroopers, including 13 officers, were evacuated from there.



Many then asked themselves the question of how the enemy could, in front of the victoriously advancing front of the federals, assemble a detachment of 2,500 people and organize an ambush on the path of the landing company. Moreover, after the start of this battle, for two and a half days (three daylight hours and two nights) he kept in blockade and methodically shot Russian soldiers and officers who were cut off from the main forces of the regiment, and the company sent to help the paratroopers also fell into ambush. As a result, the 6th company died in an unequal battle, leaving a bitter memory of itself in the lines of the army poet V. Verstakov:

The winged infantry
did not come out of the
fire... Forgive me, 6th
company, Russia and me.

Komsomolskoe

A prominent event of the Second Chechen War in March 2000 was the battle for the village of Komsomolskoye, which lasted more than two weeks. They once again showed the high professional training of the militants and the insufficient training of the federal troops and their command.

Shortly before dawn on March 5, a large detachment of Ruslan Gelayev's militants, having destroyed a flimsy military cover, entered the Komsomolskoye village, which had been liberated and "cleansed" shortly before. Only after that it became clear that this village was a well-prepared defensive area in terms of engineering, which the Chechens so needed to continue the war. But for some reason, the federals did not take this into account in a timely manner and did not destroy or at least did not blow up the long-term firing structures located in this settlement, and did not mine the approaches to the village from the side of the mountains.

When breaking into the village, the Chechens attacked and destroyed two motorized rifle platoons that occupied the dominant heights on the outskirts of Komsomolskoye. The same fate befell two reconnaissance groups reinforced by tanks, sent to help the motorized riflemen. Chechen snipers, who sat on the heights, quickly established control over the area and hit everything that seemed hostile to them. The Chechen village with the ridiculous name "Komsomolskoye" has become a strong stronghold. The Russian command reacted to the capture of Komsomolskoye by militants with the usual slowness. During the

day, troops were drawn to the village, random air strikes were launched on it from the air. But as a result of all this, the village was just starting to burn, destruction of the peaceful sector appeared, and streams of refugees began to flow from it. Only by March 9, army formations were able to take the height on the way from Komsomolskoye to the mountains, and detachments of internal troops started fighting on the outskirts of the village. It was immediately announced to the whole country that the militants were securely blocked in Komsomolskoye. But the quality of a "reliable blockade" could be doubted. The very next day it became known that

Ruslan Gelaev left Komsomolskoye. The details of his "departure" are still unknown. According to the witness of these events, the correspondent of Krasnaya Zvezda K. Rashchepkin, information about the departure of Gelaev to the troops came in a very strange way. The regiment commander who arrived told his subordinates: "In the morning, my wife called ZAS: on TV they said that Gelaev had left Komsomolskoye." It may seem strange, but it is a fact that federal commanders often learned about individual actions of militants from the mass media, and not from their intelligence agencies. The impression was created that federal intelligence in Chechnya was extremely weak. On March 11, a more organized offensive of the federal troops

began against the Chechens who settled in Komsomolskoye. On March 20, the battles for Komsomolskoye were officially declared over. The troops lifted the blockade of the village, where single shots were still heard. Komsomolskoye was in ruins: not a single house survived. Then it was "cleaned up". It was said about the result of heavy fighting: hundreds of killed militants, and three prisoners, including two Chinese and one Indian ...



Mountains can only be better than mountains...

The absence of significant military victories in Chechnya by the day of the presidential election forced the Kremlin to look for other victories. On March 21, in Moscow, the forces of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs carried out an operation to eliminate "the largest organized criminal community that financed Chechen gangs." The Segodnya newspaper of March 23, 2000 reported that, according to officials, several dozen commercial organizations were engaged in this activity, which accumulated "money received from extortion, fraudulent operations and other criminal activities in the regions" in the accounts of three banks: "Trustcreditbank", "IRS" and "Bread of Russia". From there, part of the money went to foreign accounts of Chechen field commanders, and the rest in the form of cash - directly to the rebellious republic. In this way, according to experts, in just two months the Chechens managed to "launder" about 20 million dollars. Arrests, searches and investigations began.

At the end of March 2000, presidential elections were held in Russia, already in the first round of which V.V. Putin won. No one doubted the victory of Vladimir Vladimirovich - the administrative resource no longer failed, as it was at the time of B. N. Yeltsin's re-elections in 1996.

Chechens reacted

to the election of a new Russian president in their own way. On March 29, in the Vedeno district, a convoy of the Perm OMON was shot in an ambush. 34 people were killed, several were missing. And, as always, the enemy left with impunity, help came very late, no culprits were found ...

Less than a month after the shooting of the column of the Perm OMON, on April 23, 2000, militants in broad daylight once again successfully ambushed the path of the rear column of federal troops southeast of Shali, three kilometers south of the village of Serzhen-Yurt. Soldiers from the 51st Airborne Regiment of the Tula Airborne Division got into it. Having missed the armored vehicles of the cover, the separatists shot at the trucks. As a result, a fuel truck and five vehicles with ammunition were destroyed, 15 people were killed, and six were injured. ABOUT

losses among the militants, the official Russian press said: "The extremists retreating towards the village of Marzoi-Mokhk left 20 dead in the gorge. Another 14 bandits were taken prisoner." Further, the federal command assured gullible citizens that "the advance of the column was organized with the fulfillment of all necessary requirements: reconnaissance of the route and cover by ground and air means." But why the paratroopers - this is the elite of the Russian army - were ambushed and suffered such significant losses, and this time was not explained.



trench life

Three more days passed, and almost at the same place, southeast of Shali, a search detachment of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, heading for reconnaissance of the enemy in the area of the entrance to the Veden Gorge, was ambushed. Around noon, when the fighting vehicles of the feds passed

Serzhen-Yurt and turned out to be three kilometers south of the village, they "stumbled" on a detachment of militants numbering up to 60 people. The Russians accepted the fight and called for reinforcements, but even before he approached they were attacked by a second group of Chechens from the rear. As a result, according to official figures, ten Russian servicemen were killed, and 25 bodies of militants were found at the battlefield.

At the end of April 2000, the figures for the losses of federal troops in the Second Chechen War were made public. According to them, they amounted to 2181 people killed and 6388 wounded. Undoubtedly, the federal casualties were much higher, and no casualties were reported among the militants and residents of Chechnya.

The entry of the Second Chechen War into the final phase also manifested itself in the federal government's search for that force or personality that could lead the post-war republic. As expected, Beslan Gantamirov became the first contender for the Kremlin's support. This was preceded by a demonstration of resentment of the Chechen police commander at the federal authorities for insufficient attention to the merits of his subordinates. In response, a personal message of thanks and personalized commander's watch to Gantamirov from Vladimir Putin, as well as shoulder straps of a lieutenant colonel, which Anatoly Kvashnin, chief of the General Staff, personally brought to the obstinate Chechen in Gudermes.



Finally arrived...

According to the federal authorities, Aslan Maskhadov, who discredited himself, was not included in the calculation. He had to answer for everything that happened in Chechnya after 1996. The second Chechen president was put on the federal wanted list. But even after that, he continued to remain on the territory of the republic for a long time and was considered its president, periodically making anti-Russian statements. He behaved impudently and confidently, especially since on May 2, 2000, his wife Kusama, their daughter Fatima, accompanied by a small retinue, through the checkpoint of the customs-border point of the 44th border detachment "Upper Lars" on two black "Volga" on Russian foreign

passports freely left the borders of the Russian Federation and went to Georgia, and from there to Turkey. The militants

continued to be active. On May 11, near the village of Galashki in the Sunzhensky district of Ingushetia, a Russian convoy consisting of two trucks and one BMD escort was ambushed. As a result, 18 people were killed, three were wounded and one was missing.

lead.

Later, as a result of the investigation, it was revealed that the militants knew the route of the column well and prepared this ambush in advance. Trenches were dug in the area of its organization. The Chechen attack took place in the daytime. The cars were hit with grenade launchers and then shot at with small arms. Having done their job, the attackers, as usual, left with impunity. The federal authorities have run off their feet in search of the

culprits. Not finding them among the Chechens, they accused the President of Ingushetia Ruslan Aushev of poor control over the territory of the republic. R. Aushev, in turn, said that he had warned the Russian command in advance about the infiltration of a group of militants into Ingushetia with the aim of attacking military columns, but did not find understanding. Moscow did not answer Aushev, who irritated her more and more. The days of the Ingush president were already numbered. I studied at the same time as Ruslan Aushev at the M. V. Frunze Military Academy, where he entered after

participating in the hostilities in Afghanistan as a Hero of the Soviet Union. During his studies, he was distinguished by modesty, enjoyed great respect from his comrades. Only upon closer acquaintance could one guess in this man some arrogance characteristic of the representatives of the mountain peoples, which could easily be confused with a heightened sense of self-esteem. When someone reproached Aushev that he received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union undeservedly, after graduating from the Academy, Ruslan again asked to be sent to Afghanistan. No matter what evil tongues say, but this act always aroused my respect. And the fact that Ingushetia during the presidency of R. Aushev was not drawn into the Chechen conflict is also, of course, his great merit.

At the start of the new millennium

Time passed. There were no significant changes on the military front in Chechnya, but there were significant changes on the political front. There was a change of command of the grouping of federal troops in the North Caucasus. General V.P. Baranov was appointed commander of the Joint Group.

At the behest of the Kremlin, in mid-June 2000, the former mufti of Chechnya, Akhmad-hadzhi Kadyrov, became the head of the administration of the Chechen Republic. He was born in 1951 in Karaganda. Later, returning to Chechnya, he graduated from the Bukhara Madrasah and the Islamic Institute in Tashkent. For a long time he was one of the closest associates of D. Dudayev and A. Maskhadov, the one who declared jihad in the war with Russia. He served as the Supreme Mufti of Chechnya. In 1996, he participated in negotiations in Khasavyurt. But then, having quarreled with A. Maskhadov in 1998, the mufti began his political game. On October 10, 1999, by decree of A. Maskhadov, he was removed from the post of mufti with the motivation "enemy of the Chechen people" and sentenced to death.

November 17 A. Kadyrov met with representatives of V. Putin. On June 12, 2000, V. Putin signed a decree on the appointment of A. Kadyrov as head of the provisional Chechen administration.



Akhmad Kadyrov, President of the Chechen Republic

The appointment of A. Kadyrov to this post was not easy: twice this procedure was postponed. The mufti met fierce resistance in Chechnya, which was unexpected not only for the Kremlin, but also for the military command, which seemed to know the situation in the conflict zone well. At first, the heads of district administrations opposed A. Kadyrov's candidacy: 12 out of 18 heads signed an appeal to V. V. Putin with a request to reconsider the decision to appoint Kadyrov. Most of them were appointed to these positions in 1995-1996 under D. Zavgayev and rightly feared that with the coming to power of Kadyrov, a decisive reshuffle of forces would begin throughout Chechnya. But the forces were too unequal, and A. Kadyrov's candidacy was approved.



After A. Kadyrov came to power and the deployment of his people, the process of returning Chechnya to peaceful life began. By that time, 320 thousand people lived on the territory of the republic, of which 20 thousand were Russians. Industry and agriculture were almost completely destroyed, despite the fact that in 1991 there were 120 industrial enterprises in Chechnya that produced 6% of motor gasoline and diesel fuel, 92% of aviation oils and about 80% of paraffin from the volumes produced throughout the USSR. It was extremely difficult, almost impossible, to restore this industry under the new conditions. But on the territory of the republic there were many mini-factories that produced low-quality gasoline, which was then sold throughout the Russian Federation. Where and to whom the money from these sales went is easy to understand.

The federal center sent another large cash injections, specialists, and equipment to the republic. Restoration work has begun at the Grozny fields and oil pipelines, markets, shops, hospitals, schools have started working ...

The authorities were clearly in a hurry. At the end of June 2000, the end of the military phase of the anti-terrorist operation was announced. At the same time, it was announced that during this operation, according to official figures, 2,127 Russian servicemen were killed and more than 6,000 were wounded. Nothing was reported about the losses of the Chechen side.

But it turned out to be very difficult to start a new life on the ruins, in the conditions of mass corruption of officials at all levels. There were not enough specialists on the spot, and the money sent to Chechnya by the center somehow somehow disappeared. For example, according to FSB director Patrushev, in 2002 alone, 700 million rubles allocated for the restoration of Chechnya were "squandered". Friction arose in the relationship between A. Kadyrov and representatives of the center.

So, at the insistence of Kadyrov, the prime ministers of Chechnya, who were appointed by Moscow, were constantly changing. Moreover, the Chechen president put pressure, and Moscow obeyed this

pressure.

The federal security forces were constantly working to clear the territory of Chechnya of the remnants of illegal armed formations and hunted down their commanders. In the 20th of April 2002, the death of the Arab mercenary Khattab was announced, in the first days of May, information appeared about the death of field commanders Hamid Dukumanov and Khaled abu Khalek.



Thank you for your service!

The Chechens responded with new terrorist acts. On October 19, a Tavria car was blown up in Moscow, as a result 17 people were injured. On October 23, militants attacked the theater center on Dubrovka. 119 civilian hostages were killed. Peace in Chechnya itself also did not last long. The mass media constantly reported on new terrorist acts on the territory of the rebellious republic and in its environs. Thus, on December 27, 2002, a truck loaded with explosives was blown up near the government building in Grozny. 71 people died, 130 were injured.

But Moscow continued to work on resolving the situation in Chechnya. On March 23, 2003, a referendum was held there on the draft Constitution of the Chechen Republic and the election of governing bodies. It was announced that 95% of the Chechens expressed their desire to remain part of the Russian Federation and begin arranging a peaceful life.

The militants responded to the peaceful initiatives of fellow countrymen in their own way. On May 12, a truck with explosives was blown up in

the village of Znamenskoye. On May 14, two suicide bombers blew themselves up in Ilkhans-yurt. As a result of these actions, 76 people died and 224 people were injured.



"Impregnable" fort of the beginning of the XXI century

On May 5, in Moscow, during a rock music festival, two female suicide bombers set off explosive devices attached to their bodies. 13 people died and another 50 were injured.

On October 5, 2003, presidential elections were held in Chechnya. The election was won by Akhmad Kadyrov, for whom more than 80% of voters voted. The hunt for the leaders of

the Chechen fighters continued and went beyond the borders of the republic. On February 13, 2004, the chief financier and ideologist of the Chechen terrorists, Z. Yandarbiyev, was killed in Doha, the capital of Qatar. The Russian mass media wrote about internal squabbles in the Chechen environment. Others spoke of the presence in this case of a "trace of Moscow", and even persons involved in this act were detained. The

milantants carried out retaliatory terrorist acts. On May 9, 2004, a powerful explosion thundered at the Dynamo stadium in Grozny. As a result of this explosion, six people were killed and about 60 people were injured. Among the dead was the President of the Chechen Republic A. Kadyrov. He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero.

Russian Federation with the wording "For courage and heroism shown in the revival of the Chechen Republic and in the fight against terrorism." In connection

with the death of the president, his duties were assigned to the chairman of the government of the republic, Sergei Abramov. The son of the late Ramzan Kadyrov was appointed to the post of First Deputy Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic.



Mass graves have no weeping widows

\ On August 29, 2004, Alu Dadashevich Alkhanov, the former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic, was proclaimed the new president of the Chechen Republic, for whom 70% of voters voted. He was born in 1957 in Kazakhstan and served in the Soviet Army. In 1983 he graduated from the Mogilev transport police school, then the higher Rostov police school. He was in opposition to D. Dudayev. From 1992 to 1996 he worked as a deputy head, then head of the Grozny police department of the North

Caucasian Department of Internal Affairs. After the signing of the Khasavyurt agreements in 1996 and the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, until 2000 he worked as the head of the police department at the Shakhtnaya station in the Rostov region. Then, together with the federal troops, he returned to Chechnya and until 2003 was the head of the Grozny LUVD and from this position was appointed Minister of

the Interior of the Chechen Republic. The terrorist attacks continued. On August 31, 2004, an explosion occurred at the Rizhskaya metro station in Moscow. 10 people were killed, many were injured. The explosion

was carried out by a Chechen suicide bomber. On September 1, in Beslan, North Ossetia, a group of Chechen terrorists attacked a school, taking more than a thousand hostages, most of them children. According to official figures, the group of militants consisted of 32 people, its command was carried out by Ruslan Khachbarov,

nicknamed "Colonel". The federal forces carried out an operation to free the captured hostages. The Ossetian riot police and the police acted rather routinely, although many policemen showed personal courage. As a result of this operation, 331 people were killed among the hostages and policemen, the terrorists lost 32 militants killed and one captured. The Beslan tragedy became one of the saddest events of 2004 and will forever remain a page of horror in the memory of the people.

On November 27, 2005, parliamentary elections were held in Chechnya, the first meeting of which took place in Grozny on December 12. A few days after that, a meeting of the leadership of Chechnya with the President of the Russian Federation took place in Moscow. At this meeting, the Chechen side stated that the republic has everything necessary to restore normal life and its own development. On March 4, 2006, Chechen President Alu Alkhanov signed a decree appointing Ramzan Kadyrov as prime minister of the republic. Soon the young Kadyrov became the absolute leader in Chechnya. A new stage in the history of this long-suffering land began, which continues to this day.



Farewell to the fallen brother-soldiers.

Conclusion

For many centuries, Russia showed an increased interest in the North Caucasus and saw this territory as part of its composition, despite the fact that some peoples of this region were guided by completely different values and understood cooperation with their northern neighbor in a completely different way. As a result of this, sharp contradictions arose every now and then between Moscow and the territories of the North Caucasus, which were usually resolved

with the help of armed force. History has shown that the North Caucasus is too complex and contradictory a place that cannot be understood with stereotyped standards. The rulers and peoples of this region, in their character and upbringing, were very different from those who inhabited Russia, and often what the Russian called a mortal sin, the highlander considered valor and ingenuity, and what some Caucasian peoples prayed for, Russians treat with incomprehension.

Perhaps as a result of this, relations between Central Russia and the North Caucasus have always been difficult, requiring skillful and comprehensive implementation of economic, ideological and military sanctions. Often, military sanctions were decisive, due to the geographical features of the region, the presence of many peoples and cultures in it.

As a rule, the Chechens were at the head

of the anti-Russian forces in the North Caucasus, and they were less inclined to compromise than other peoples. Centuries-old traditions, a special kind of upbringing, religion, a specific way of life made this small nation capable of actively resisting the Russian central government. And although the true goals of this resistance were carefully hidden, the declared reasons were enough to bring the matter to war.

The First and Second Chechen Wars differed significantly from each other. The first war was fought solely to achieve certain economic and political goals, as a result of which the military aspect often ended up in second place, and offensive operations and battles stopped in their midst. In the second war, the armed struggle was placed on a higher place and achieved its goal.

At the same time, the military art of the Russian troops in both Chechen wars had many shortcomings. The weakness of the preparation of operations, the lack of forces and means, the actions of consolidated military formations, and the poor security of combat operations affected. As a result, the fighting itself was often carried out at a slow pace, were stereotyped and did not lead to the complete defeat of the enemy. Rarely practiced such effective forms of hostilities as bypass, coverage, complete isolation of the area, encirclement. To a certain extent, the implementation of these actions was also hindered by the partisan nature of the war, to which the Chechens switched already in 1995 and which became the main one throughout their armed confrontation with the federal troops. The wars in Chechnya were fought under special conditions. Difficult terrain was well used by an experienced enemy. To deal with such an enemy, it was necessary to act differently.

Therefore, the combat experience gained in the wars in the North Caucasus that took place in the 19th - early 20th centuries was invaluable. Unfortunately, many of his moments were forgotten by the beginning of the new Chechen war. It was necessary to gain new combat experience at the cost of great loss of life and material costs, and the process of forming the mountain military art of the Russian troops still cannot be called complete.

The North Caucasus and, in particular, the Chechen Republic remain the most troubled region on the map of the Russian Federation today. There are still shots fired and people are dying. No one will take the liberty of saying exactly when this will end. In mid-April 2009, at the request of the President of the Chechen Republic R. Kadyrov, attempts were made to

cancel the regime of the anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya. The Chechen authorities sought to present Chechnya as a prosperous, peaceful republic and offered tourist visits to its territory. Behind all this were specific goals, including the recognition of Grozny's international status. The Chechen leaders needed a wide personal gateway to the big world. With full control over the internal troops of the republic, the police, the prosecutor's office and customs, this would be an inexhaustible source of new

income.

But the reality was completely different. Immediately after the abolition of the regime of the anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya, there were several attacks by militants on the forces and objects of legitimate power in this republic. As a result, the regime of the anti-terrorist operation was restored a week later on the territory of four regions of the Chechen Republic, and everyone once again realized that the desired peace was still very far away.

The long-awaited peace never came, and when it comes is unknown. On the territory of Russia, a generation is growing up, for which the word "Chechnya" is associated with the word "war" and which looks to the south with apprehension. In Chechnya itself, boys are growing up whose fathers died in battles with federal troops. Who will find the words that can reconcile these people and uproot the memory is unknown. But one thing is clear - such words must be found, if only concerns about the integrity and further development of the Russian Federation are not empty words.



Returned!!!